



ABOARD AMY JACKSON'S BACHELORETTE IN FRANCE P4

Pics: Tejas Kudtarkar

Tejas Kudtarkar

OF INDIA

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Eid Mubarak

Location courtesy: Baliboo Mumbai



MOHSIN KHAN

## EID IS THE TIME TO BE POSITIVE & THANKFUL: MOHSIN KHAN

Vinay MR Mishra

This Eid is going to be more special," says actor Mohsin Khan. "I'm going to celebrate it with my three-year-old nephew and my niece, who was born last month. I am very attached to them, in fact, I have named them. This is my niece's first Eid, and we are looking forward to celebrating it together," says Mohsin.

CONTINUED ON P3



I have tried making sevaiyan, but I always make some blunder or the other. My mother asks me to leave the kitchen every time I enter and try cooking!



Badshah is currently on a tour to the US and Canada

## Heartbroken: Badshah issues apology after Dallas show cut short

Badshah on Saturday apologised to fans after he had to cut short his concert in Dallas, US, due to a "discrepancy" between local promoters and the production company. In an Instagram post, the singer-rapper wrote, "Dallas, I'm so heartbroken and bummed about what happened today. You guys are incredible and deserve

better. I was really looking forward to performing in your city but due to a discrepancy between the local promoters and the production company I was forced to cut short the set and stop the show midway," he said. The 38-year-old musician said promoters need to be better equipped, especially for large-format shows, as it takes a considerable amount of energy and effort to put together a tour.

PTI

## Bachpan ki Eid best hoti hai: Aly Goni



ALY GONI

Riya Sharma

Dressed in a Pathani, Aly Goni welcomes us to his beautifully decorated Mumbai home for Eid. This year marks the first time in many years that Aly is not returning to Jammu to celebrate Eid with his family. "I have a shoot the day after so I won't be able to go home this time. Mummy, papa aur

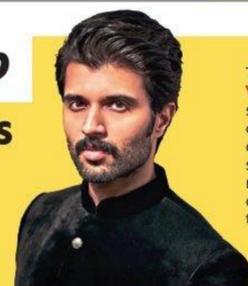
baaki sab upset hain ki main Eid pe unke saath nahi hoon. Jasmine (Bhasin) Utrakhand mein thi toh woh ek din jaldi apna trek karke aa rahi hai because she wants to spend Eid with me. My brother and sister are here so we are celebrating Eid in Mumbai with some of our close friends," says the Yeh Hai Mohabbatein actor.

Jo bachpan mein Eid banti hai na woh bade hoke nahi milti hai. Jitna uss mein ji sakte ho, utna jiyo. Eid Mubarak

CONTINUED ON P3

## Buzzstop

VIJAY- RASHMIKA'S SONG SHARED BY PARIS OLYMPICS' INSTA HANDLE IN A MASHUP



The 2018 song *Inkem Inkem Kavale* from the Vijay Devarakonda-Rashmika Mandanna starrer Telugu film *Geetha Govindam* recently received a surprising recognition. The official Instagram handle of the Olympics surprised fans by featuring the song in a mashup video showcasing the Eiffel Tower adorned with the Olympic rings in anticipation of the Paris games. Since then #InkemInkemKavale has been trending on social media platforms.

TNN

## 'Cruise weddings offer the luxury of destination wedding with exclusivity'

Divya Kaushik

With the rise in luxury cruise vacations, the demand for cruise weddings has also gained popularity with many looking to host a lavish ceremony in the upcoming season. Wedding planners share that inquiries for hosting functions and other celebrations like birthday and anniversary parties on cruises have already been high. However, a growing number of HNIs are now looking to host entire wedding celebrations on a cruise, lasting almost seven days.

Cordelia Cruises



Wedding Times

### 'A cruise allows one to celebrate across multiple picturesque locations'

Talking about the interest in cruise weddings, Palak Chandra, a Delhi-based wedding planner, says, "Everyone wants their wedding to be the talk of the town, or be the talking point on social media. Those looking to host a wedding without any budget constraints look for exclusive elements to make their celebration a luxe experience. A cruise offers the luxury of destination wedding with privacy." "A cruise wedding offers a distinctive and enchanting experience that sets it apart from other destinations. A cruise allows couples to celebrate across multiple picturesque locations. It offers the convenience of hosting all your wedding events in one place. The wide range of activities and amenities available onboard also caters to guests of all age groups," adds Jurgen Bailom, president & CEO of a cruise company.

### 'Beach outings, spa sessions, culinary experiences as part of cruise weddings'

Beach outings, cultural tours, adventure sports, culinary experiences - cruise weddings are different experiences packed into one. "Shore excursion packages which offer beach outings, cultural tours, adventure sports, culinary experiences etc are popular. Other entertainment options include magic shows and the well-known burlesque show with an Indian touch to it. Apart from these shows, there's always something or the other happening on different decks of the cruise like live music, salsa lessons, DJ parties, karaoke nights, and recreational activities such as swimming, spa treatments, and fitness classes," informs Jurgen Bailom, president and CEO of a cruise company.



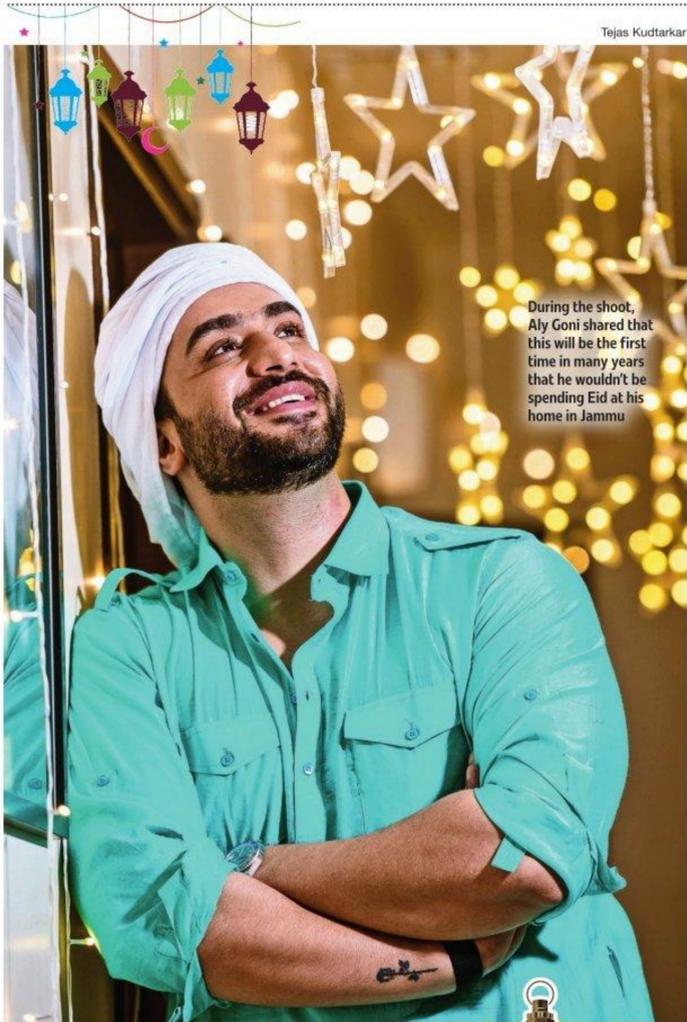
### 'Minimum budget for a cruise wedding is around ₹3cr'

The budget for a cruise wedding can vary based on guest count, itinerary, duration, decor, entertainment, venue and other requirements. Those in the wedding business say that the range is from ₹16,600 to ₹41,500 per person a day. "The Mediterranean circuit, Singapore, Barcelona are emerging as popular cruise destinations for weddings and celebrations. The guestlist ranges from 200 to 300 people and a minimum budget of ₹3.5cr is needed. The budget can go higher depending on destination, number of guests and number of events," says Darshan Shroff, founder of a Mumbai-based wedding company.

Most guests look at five to seven days of celebrations, starting from bachelor and bachelorette parties and ending with post wedding lunch. Earlier, the only reservation that people had about hosting a wedding on the cruise was setting up a mandap, but now cruise liners offer mandap with hawan kund aboard

- Palak Chandra, a Delhi-based wedding planner





Tejas Kudtarkar  
During the shoot, Aly Goni shared that this will be the first time in many years that he wouldn't be spending Eid at his home in Jammu

# Bachpan mein khushi hoti thi jab Eidi milti thi, ab deni padhti hai: Aly

CONTINUED FROM K 1

## 'MAIN EIDI SE APNE FAVOURITE TOYS, SHOES LETA THA BACHPAN MEIN, WO MERI BEST MEMORY HAI'

For Aly, Eid is all about spending quality time with loved ones, eating good food and dressing up. "Bachpan mein khushi hoti thi jab Eidi milti thi, ab deni padhti hai. But I have so many fond memories of Eid. Growing up, I would wake up really early and get ready for the festivities. **Pehle toh raat ko neend nahi aati thi khushi se ki kal Eid hai, phir uske baad sab relatives ke ghar jaana.** Best part tha jab Eidi milti thi. I would wait the entire year for things like shoes, toys or anything else that I wanted to buy. **Tab gharwale itna leke dete bhi nahi thay, aur tab financial situation aisi nahi thi. So, jo bhi cheez pasand aati thi, main**

wait karta tha aur Eid ke din rishtedaron se jo Eidi milti thi woh jodta tha. **Jab kuch paisa kam padh jaate thay toh aise logon ke ghar jaata tha jinke saath mera utna achcha uthna baithna bhi nahi tha jab main unke ghar jaake baith jaata tha jab tak woh Eidi nahi dete thay (laughs). Phir Eidi leke main jaake woh cheez lete tha. Woh meri best memory hai Eid ki,"** shares the Bigg Boss 14 contestant.

## 'MERE SAB FRIENDS MERE GHAR AATE HAIN EID KE DIN'

While Aly will be missing his home this Eid, he says that the day is about love, so people spend time with their friends and family if they are around. "Sabke saath Eid manao, jo aapke friends hai unko ghar pe bulao aur achcha khana khilao. **Mere ghar pe jab bhi Eid hoti hain mere saare dost aate hain. They**

wait for Eid. And mere young fans ko yahi kahunga ki jo bachpan mein Eid banti hai na woh bade hoke nahi milti

hai. Bachpan ki Eid is the best Eid, jitna uss mein ji sakte ho, utna jiyo. Eid Mubarak," the actor wishes his fans.

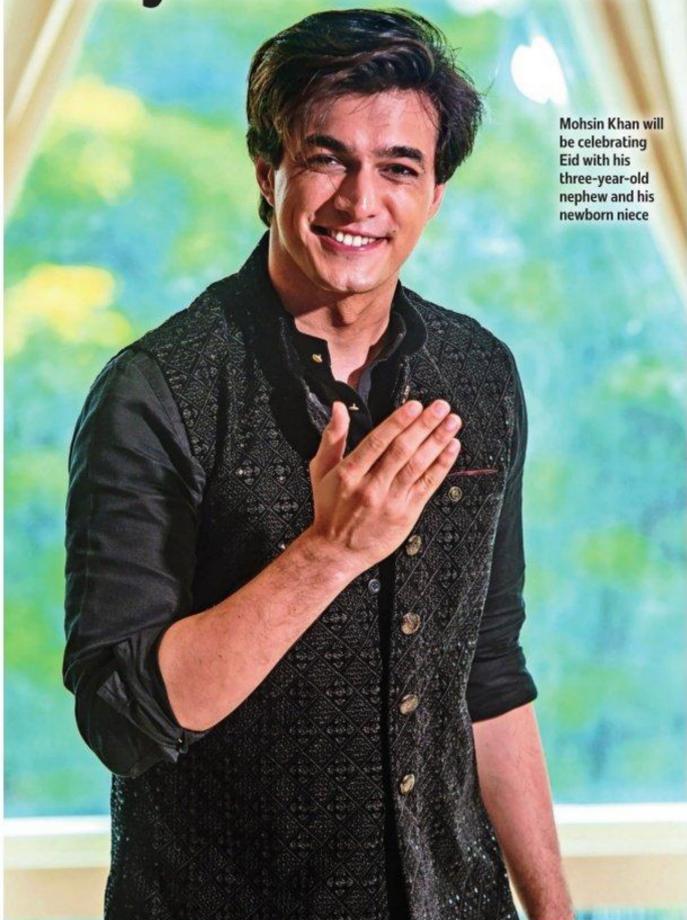
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Tejas Kudtarkar

# As kids, we would indulge in some cooking on Eid, says Mohsin Khan



Mohsin Khan will be celebrating Eid with his three-year-old nephew and his newborn niece

CONTINUED FROM K 1

## 'ON EID, THE ENTIRE FAMILY COMES TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE'

The *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* actor, who is currently focussing on web shows, says, "When I was busy doing a daily soap, I wouldn't get enough time to celebrate festivals. Now, I try to spend the day with my loved ones. We have a big family, and on Eid, we all come together. We pray and eat together. As kids, we would also indulge in some cooking and look forward to dressing up in our new Pathani suits."

Ask him what he plans to wear on the festive occasion, and he says, "I am not much into fashion, but I've got myself a new *kurta* for the occasion (smiles)."

## 'THIS DAY IS ALL ABOUT SHARING AND CHARITY'

Mohsin starts his day with a special Eid prayer: "Praying alongside my family and friends feels divine. Eid is a time to be posi-

When I was busy doing a daily soap, I wouldn't get enough time to celebrate festivals. Now, I try to spend the day with my loved ones. **We have a big family, and on Eid, we pray and eat together**

tive and thankful. I performed Umrah with my family a decade ago and next year around this time, I'm looking forward to performing Haj with my family," he shares.

The actor adds, "From childhood, we have been taught how this day is all about sharing and charity. There's a lot I want to do in my life ahead. I want to try and stick to the meaning of my name - it means the one who gives. In future, I hope to open a school and a clinic for those in need. I also want to start my NGO, and I'm working in that direction."

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# A tiny rebel is joining us: Drashti Dhami announces pregnancy



@dhamidrashti  
Niraj Khemka and Drashti Dhami

**D**rashti Dhami and her husband, Niraj Khemka, took to social media recently to share the news that they are all set to welcome their first baby. "In a galaxy not so far away, a tiny rebel is joining our crazy tribe. Please send love, blessings, cash & french fries our way #BabyKOnBoard. We can't wait for October 2024 (sic)," the excited parents-

to-be wrote. In the video, the couple wore personalised T-shirts and held a poster that said, "Baby coming soon... October 2024." Their family members, too, can be seen in the video. Many of their friends, including Vikrant Massey, Mouni Roy, Sanaya Irani, Sriti Jha and Hina Khan, congratulated the couple on the good news.

**In a galaxy not so far away, a tiny rebel is joining our crazy tribe. Please send love, blessings, cash & French fries our way**

- Drashti Dhami and Niraj Khemka

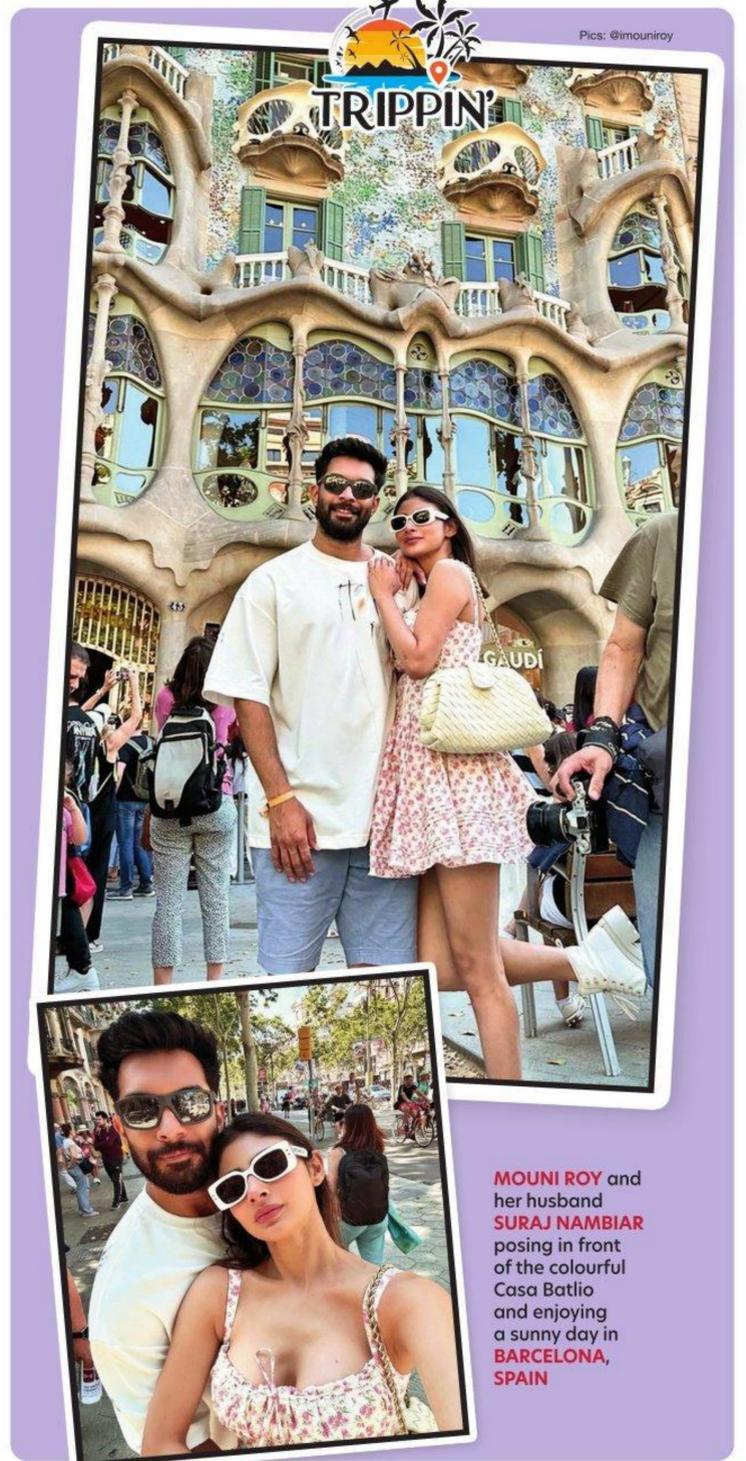
Rubina Dilaik, who welcomed twins in November 2023, wrote, "Available anytime for all new mommy stuff (sic)." Drashti and Niraj tied the knot in 2015 and were also seen together in the dance reality show *Nach Baliye*. TNN

# Amy Jackson's bachelorette bash

Pics: @iamamyjackson



Amy Jackson had a fun-filled bachelorette party with her girl squad on a private jet in France recently. The actress got engaged to *Gossip Girl* actor Ed Westwick in January, and the two celebrated their engagement party in March



Pics: @imouniroy

**MOUNI ROY** and her husband **SURAJ NAMBIAR** posing in front of the colourful Casa Batlló and enjoying a sunny day in **BARCELONA, SPAIN**

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# Education TIMES

## To control discrepancies in theory and practical marks, CBSE suggests stricter internal assessments in schools

Schools must give freedom to external examiners to evaluate the performance of students in practical examinations

Priyadarshini Gupta  
@timesgroup.com

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) recently issued an advisory to schools urging them to reassess their internal assessment procedures. This comes after identifying a significant discrepancy between theory and practical exam marks in classes X and XII in over 500 schools. It was observed that many students who scored poorly in theory exams were scoring full marks in practical assessments.

"The variance highlights a need for meticulous assessment during practical examinations in schools. The aim of the advisory is to implement a more robust, transparent, and reliable mechanism to ensure that the assessment process is realistic and adds substantial value to the students' academic journey," states the CBSE circular.

A CBSE official on the condition of anonymity, says, "We have data records related to all theory and practical marks for both classes X and XII. If all 40 students in a class are getting full marks in practical and only a few are getting high scores in theory, that

helps us identify discrepancies in the examination process."

This is not the first time the board has issued an advisory, he says, adding that the CBSE conducts this exercise every year. He says, "In a bid to get good scores, many schools give more marks to students in practical exams. Even if a student scores low marks in theory, he/she will pass the examination with the help of practical marks. This upgrades schools' overall results

and retains its reputation." **Maintain ethical behaviour** Teachers along with the school management should maintain consistency and be ethical while deciding the practical marks. "Many times, to save their jobs, teachers resort to marks inflation," he says, adding, "These discrepancies affect the morale of the bright students who despite all their hard work are positioned together with the non-deserving students."

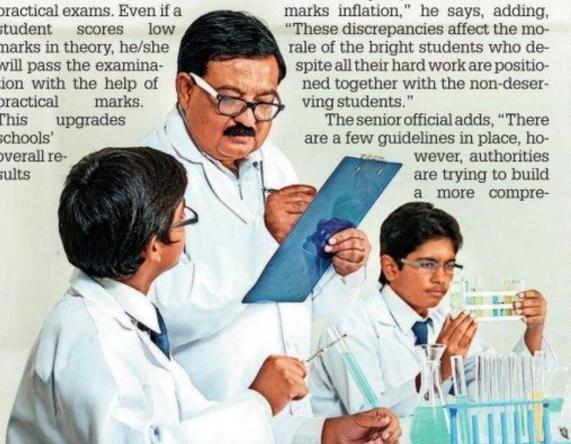
The senior official adds, "There are a few guidelines in place, however, authorities are trying to build a more comprehensive assessment system so that these inconsistencies do not exist. The CBSE will try to sensitise the schools."

The marks disparity affects morale of the bright students, who despite their hard work, are positioned with non-deserving students

Sangeeta Jay, former Delhi government school principal, says, "Students often perform better in familiar environments. In a school, a student feels comfortable due to their surroundings; during internal assessment, they are surrounded by their teachers, friends and there is no intervention of any other agencies or external examiners. Hence, approximately 30%-40% students perform well due to this reason. On the other hand, when a student appears for their boards for which they have to go to other centres to write the papers, they may become nervous in a new environment. This affects the students, and they may not perform

well." She also highlights that a small percentage of students may be weak in studies, but are consistent in class in terms of attendance, obedience, behaviour, values, and ECA. "There are a few first-generation students, who get better scores in practical on humanitarian grounds," she says, pointing out how some students feel they need not study hard as the teachers will ultimately give them good marks in practical exams which will help them in the overall performance. "In the process, their academic performance is affected in the long run. In many scenarios, both the school and the teacher need to show results, so there is a state of compromise that seeps in," adds Jay.

**Relative connectivity** A system of relative connectivity, that is, connecting practical marks with unit tests and half-yearly exam performance to motivate consistent effort from students must be introduced. "This method will motivate students to perform better as they would know that if they get good marks in these tests, only then they would get good marks in practical exams," adds Jay.



## Central govt PENs a new system to check student dropouts and streamline migration

Shuddhanta.Patra  
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To modernise the education system, the Ministry of Education has initiated the implementation 11-digit unique identification number for students, known as the Permanent Education Number (PEN), starting from the current academic year. The PEN project, announced in 2023, will be assigned to every student provided through the UDISE+ (Unified District Information System for Education Plus) portal that covers over 14.89 lakh schools, 95 lakh teachers, and 25 crore children nationwide.

In an interview with the Education Times, IAS Sanjay Kumar, secretary, Ministry of Education, Department of School Education and Literacy, says, "The idea PEN was conceptualised to identify every student through the UDISE+ portal, as outlined in the NEP 2020. From regular administrative processes to major issues concerning students like transferring schools, the PEN will be a necessary document. The implementation of PEN would streamline and simplify the process of the student's transition from one school to the other across the country, a process often complicated, particularly at the pre-primary, primary, and upper-primary levels."

"Earlier, when parents changed their child's school, especially in classes such as II, V, or VII, their transition to the new school was not smooth, as the school administration insisted on

procuring documents such as transfer certificate, caste, birth certificates, and class records, among others, which caused immense trouble to the parents. Several students have also dropped out of school or taken a gap year owing to the cumbersome process of migrating their data in the absence of a nationwide portal to ease the procedure," he adds. Besides efficiency, PEN would bring about transparency in the education system. "PEN is a tracking mechanism for students across all government and private schools in the country. It will help monitor students' progress throughout their academic journey and also help implement government schemes based on their academic performance, which was not possible earlier. This not only streamlines administrative processes but also ensures that students' records remain consistently updated

des efficiency, PEN would bring about transparency in the education system. "PEN is a tracking mechanism for students across all government and private schools in the country. It will help monitor students' progress throughout their academic journey and also help implement government schemes based on their academic performance, which was not possible earlier. This not only streamlines administrative processes but also ensures that students' records remain consistently updated and accessible," says Kumar. However, registering for the PEN is voluntary for schools and is to be undertaken only with parents' consent. "The PEN will not just be confined to school databases but also will be linked with other platforms including DigiLocker. It will serve as a common thread across diverse learning stages, from pre-primary to PG education," says Kumar, who confirms most states have decided to implement the PEN system in their educational institutes.

actively take part in the counselling process. The vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta heard the petition filed by a NEET educator Alakh Pandey. Talking to Education Times, Advocate Rohit Jain, counsel on record for Pandey, says, "The SC does not want any major change in the counselling schedule. It will take necessary action if any discrepancies are found, so, students should not panic and continue with the counselling process." Meanwhile, acceptance of the scores without the grace marks, remains open for those who are not willing to appear for the exam again. "Students have worked hard and have written the exam honestly, they might not be keen on writing the exam again, for them the option is open to attend the counselling rounds," says Jain.

**UGC introduces Disaster Management as new subject in NET 2024 exam**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has notified the introduction of Disaster Management in the National Eligibility Test (UGC NET) exam. According to the Commission's recent notification, the new subject will come into effect from the (UGC NET) December 2024 exam. The UGC-NET is held biannually in June and December. To maintain a consistent examination schedule, the NTA, in agreement with the UGC, is administering the UGC NET exam for 83 subjects in selected cities nationwide. "Based on the expert committee's recommendations, the Commission, in its 580th meeting held on May 15, 2024, has decided Disaster Management as an additional subject for the existing list of subjects of UGC-NET," states the UGC notification.

The syllabus for the subject of Disaster Management is available on the UGC NET website.

## SC does not want any major changes in counselling schedule of NEET UG exam

Ayushi Gupta  
@timesgroup.com

The NTA recently informed the Supreme Court (SC) that after the recommendations of the high-powered recommendation committee, NTA has decided to cancel the grace marks from the scorecards of 1,563 candidates. Instead, NTA has provided students with two options - first, to accept the revised scores without the grace marks. Second, to appear for a re-exam on June 23, 2024. Meanwhile, the apex court has not put a halt on the counselling process, candidates can



actively take part in the counselling process. The vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta heard the petition filed by a NEET educator Alakh Pandey. Talking to Education Times, Advocate Rohit Jain, counsel on record for Pandey, says, "The SC does not want any major change in the counselling schedule. It will take necessary action if any discrepancies are found, so, students should not panic and continue with the counselling process." Meanwhile, acceptance of the scores without the grace marks, remains open for those who are not willing to appear for the exam again. "Students have worked hard and have written the exam honestly, they might not be keen on writing the exam again, for them the option is open to attend the counselling rounds," says Jain.

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# Building a global startup ecosystem through international collaborations

Events such as South Summit provides a broader platform for Indian startups to enhance growth and expand networking opportunities

Priyadarshini Gupta  
@timesgroup.com

With both Spain and India having rapidly growing startup ecosystems, characterised by high levels of innovation, entrepreneurship, and talent, the South Summit can have a significant impact on India's startup ecosystem. The event that provides a platform for startups to showcase their innovations, network with potential collaborators can benefit Indian startups too. **Maria Benjumea, president, South Summit**, on the sidelines of its 13th edition in Madrid, hints at a potential collaboration with India in the future. Excerpts from the interview:

By integrating innovation into university education, South Summit aims to prepare students for the evolving workforce. — **Maria Benjumea, president, South Summit**



for innovation and investment. The change in Spain is huge. There were a few startups in Europe, but nobody knew about Spain; Madrid was not on the map. However, now, Spain has claimed its position leading to incredible growth. The Summit has had a notable impact on the global startup ecosystem by showcasing Spanish startups to the world and attracting both domestic and international investment.

**Given your experience with South Summit, what key differences do you see between the Spanish and Indian startup ecosystems?**  
The Spanish and Indian startup ecosystems have distinct characteristics that are shaped by their economic, cultural, and technological landscapes. Spain's ecosystem is

smaller and less matured compared to India, but it has been growing steadily, particularly in Madrid. The Spanish government has also been very supportive of startups through various initiatives. I think that India is fantastic when it comes to startups, and we shall look forward to joining hands in the future.

**Does the South Summit plan to expand globally?**  
South Summit is working on expanding its reach globally, with upcoming events sche-

**There is a need to emphasise the importance of human-centric innovation and call for development of technologies that prioritises societal impact and sustainability**

duled in South Korea. It is the first time we will be going to Asia. By fostering connections between different startup ecosystems and cultures,

the event aims to facilitate cross-border collaboration and create business opportunities for entrepreneurs.

**What are the emerging trends and innovations in the startup world?**  
South Summit recognises that innovation is happening across all sectors and industries, with technologies like AI being prominent in recent years. However, there is a need to emphasise the importance of human-centric innovation and call for deve-

lopment of technologies that prioritises societal impact and sustainability. The world we are living today is better than ever in the history, but we must be convinced that the human being should be at the centre of it all. The Summit implements measures to promote sustainability and collaboration within the ecosystem. It includes initiatives to reduce the environmental footprint of the event and efforts to encourage collaboration between startups, corporates, and other stakeholders to address global challenges.

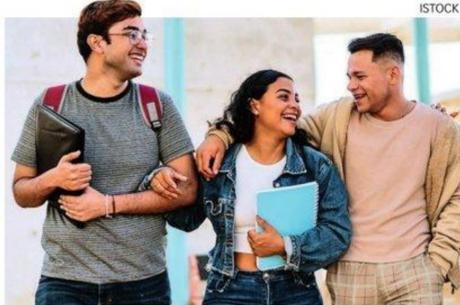
**How does South Summit encourage students to embrace startup culture?**

South Summit collaborates with universities to instil a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship among students. By integrating innovation into university education, South Summit aims to prepare students for the evolving workforce. South Summit collaborates with various universities to support innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives. While its primary partner is IE University in Madrid, it is working with other academic institutions to provide opportunities for students to engage in the startup ecosystem.



## Ace your application by writing a winning SOP for UK varsities

To stand out, highlight your academic achievements, relevant coursework, and research experience, writes **Radhika Arora**



Applying to reputed UK universities can be an exhilarating yet daunting experience. With acceptance rates for postgraduate programmes averaging a competitive 15-20%, crafting a compelling Statement of Purpose (SOP) becomes crucial. A well-written SOP can significantly increase your chances of securing admission. Here is how to ace your application with a winning SOP.

### Academic prowess

Academic excellence remains a cornerstone of the admission process. A 2021 study by QS World University Rankings highlighted that 87% of admissions tutors consider a strong academic background the most important factor. To stand out, highlight your academic achievements, relevant coursework, and research experience. Whether it is a high GPA, honours, or special recognitions, make sure to detail these accomplishments.

For instance, if you excelled in a particular subject, mention it. Describe how specific courses or research projects have prepared you for the programme you are applying to. By doing so, you demonstrate not only your academic capabilities but also your preparedness for the rigorous curriculum of major UK universities.

**Quantify achievements**  
Beyond mentioning your projects and internships, quantifying the impact of your work can make your SOP more compelling. According to a 2020 survey by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), 80% of business school admissions officers value applicants who showcase measurable results of their experiences. For example, instead of simply stating that you completed an internship, highlight the outcomes.

**Highlight soft skills**  
While academic and professional achievements are crucial, soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are equally important in the academic setting. If you have prior job experience, showcasing these skills can be particularly beneficial. A 2022 report by the

Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) highlighted the importance of these skills.

In your SOP, weave examples of your soft skills throughout. Describe how you tackled challenges in group projects or took on leadership roles, whether in a professional setting or during your academic career. These anecdotes provide a holistic view of your capabilities and readiness for a dynamic learning environment. Additionally, if you have worked with a company or organisation, providing a strong letter of recommendation from your employer can further bolster your application.

### Demonstrate programme alignment

Admissions tutors prefer SOPs that reflect a clear understanding of the chosen programme's curriculum and its alignment with the applicant's goals. Thoroughly re-

search specific modules, research projects, or faculty expertise of the programme you are interested in. Explain how these elements align with your academic and career aspirations.

**Personalise your SOP**  
Avoid submitting a generic SOP. A 2021 study by the International Association of Universities (IAU) found that admissions tutors appreciate applications that demonstrate research into the specific university's values, research foci, and unique offerings. Highlight aspects of the university that resonate with you and your goals. Whether it is the institution's culture, specific facilities, or unique programmes, mention why these factors make it the ideal place for your studies. Personalising your SOP shows that you are not just applying to a university, but to a community that aligns with your aspirations.

By following these tips, you can create a compelling narrative. Remember, a well-crafted SOP is your opportunity to make a strong impression and stand out in a competitive applicant pool. Good luck.

(The author is recruitment and marketing adviser supporting University of Sussex, UK at OneStep Global)

## A hub for those seeking green collar jobs

To build an eco-friendly world, the universities are customising courses in sustainability sciences

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Norway presents numerous opportunities for students aspiring to pursue higher education and build a career in the field of sustainable energy. The country is actively involved in various sustainable energy projects that can provide a head start to those seeking green-collar jobs.

According to a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), Norway's hydropower resources account for 92% of electricity generation, supporting an almost completely renewables-based power sector. The IEA says that Norway can further leverage its clean electricity system to decarbonise other sectors of the economy through additional electrification.

Analysis by Aurora Energy Research reveals that Nordic countries, including Norway, are expected to surpass green hydrogen demand by 20% by 2035, playing a crucial role in Europe's green hydrogen economy and decarbonisation efforts.

For students interested in advancing their knowledge in green energy, Norwegian universities offer several master's programmes tailored to the field. The University of Bergen's master's programme in Energy provides a comprehensive understanding of various energy issues, allowing students to specialise in areas such as wind, water, and solar energy, geothermal energy, and energy physics.

The University of Oslo offers a Renewable Energy Systems master's programme covering topics like science and technology, energy markets



and regulation, and smart grid technologies. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) features a master's in Sustainable Energy, a two-year course in English, with opportunities for a semester abroad. Furthermore, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) has introduced new study programmes in Nuclear Science, offering both a bachelor's and master's programme starting in the fall of 2024. The master's programme focuses on environmental radioactivity and nuclear and environmental sciences, providing insights into the impact of radionuclides

**For students keen on green energy, Norwegian varsities offer several master's programmes tailored to the field**

des on the environment, organisms, and humans.

For admission to most master's study programmes, candidates would need IELTS minimum overall score of 6.5; a minimum TOEFL score of 90, and a minimum Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) overall score of 62.

### Job opportunities

The country's commitment to sustainable practices extends to job opportunities, with positions available in renewable energy, energy efficiency, storage, auditing and management, and environmental conservation. Aspiring professionals can explore job portals, company websites. Norway's emphasis on sustainable practices, coupled with its academic support to students, makes it an attractive destination for those wishing to pursue a career in green energy.



# Infusing dynamism in Indian education and international collaboration

Deakin University campus in GIFT City fosters opportunities for cooperation between India and Australia, writes **Ravneet Pahwa**

In an era of cross-border education and global collaborations, the establishment of Deakin University's GIFT City Campus marks the advent of international institutions as cohesive partners in India's academic ecosystem. The venture underscores the potential of strategic international collaboration in capacity building within the Indian education system and fostering global education for India's tertiary population. The campus aligns with NEP 2020 to increase accessibility and affordability of global education, empowering India's 4.13 lakh students to become leaders in the nation's growth journey.

**Bridging gaps**  
Deakin University is an Australian public university, which has ranked among the top 1% of universities worldwide. Its decision to establish a campus in Gujarat GIFT City is a strategic move that will bring global educational standards in addition to work-ready learning, and a nurturing academic environment, uplifting all-round

student development. Indian students can now access the University's expertise in industry-led courses in two emerging fields of academia and industry – Business Analytics and Cybersecurity.

### Innovation orientation

The delivery of global education in India introduces innovative teaching methods, application-focused learning, industry interface, and international curricula. Keeping with this approach, the India campus aims for synergy with the fintech industry, offering students opportunities for practical experience embedded within their studies. These international branch campuses also enhance learning standards and quality assurance measures through collaborative knowledge resources.

### Industry partnerships

In the evolving education landscape in India, there is a clear trend towards industry-oriented learning, blending theory with prac-



**Indian students will get a globally recognised degree without travelling to a different country, enjoying all the associated advantages**



tical experience for enhanced professional development. The India campus leverages partnerships with reputed firms such as TCS, Infosys, Xebia and others to provide students with industry exposure. This synergy benefits both students and industry, fostering internships, job placements, and research projects tied to real-world applications.

### Skilling and entrepreneurship

The University aligns its courses with the Indian industry ne-

eds to develop strategic skills in Indian students, preparing them for both India as well as the global workforce, specially in technology and business. Additionally, it fosters knowledge enhancement in the regional ecosystem through collaboration, skilling co-

urses, and serving as an incubation centre for entrepreneurial ventures in the long run.

**Research partnerships**  
It will also foster opportunities for cooperation between Indian and Australian academic institutions, governments, and industries. This initiative paves the way for research partnerships with institutes such as IIT Gandhinagar and IIM Ahmedabad. By bringing together faculty, students, and scholars, it promises to address mutual interests such as sustainable development, public health, and technology innovation.

### Capacity building

The size of India's tertiary population and the rising demand for quality education have led to a surge in special-

ised courses and institutions. However, the EY Report 2022 highlighted gaps in academic curriculums, emphasising the need for Indian universities to align with industry needs, enhance research outcomes, and foster international collaborations. International university branch campuses bring foreign investment and expertise, shoring India's educational infrastructure and positioning it as an international education hub.

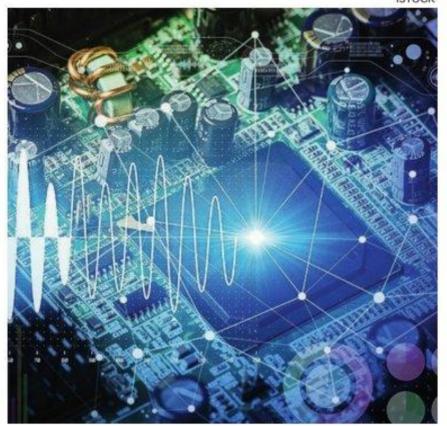
### Win-win situation for Indian students

Indian students will get a globally recognised degree without travelling to a different country, enjoying all the associated advantages. From a holistic perspective, this initiative aligns with India's participation in the global community, and supported by NEP 2020, promises a more inclusive future in education.

(The author is vice president Global Alliances & CEO South (Asia) Deakin University, Australia)

## Creating magic by converting optical energy into electric signals

The bustling semiconductor industry demands skilled workforce that is adept in Mandarin



Shuddhanta.Patra  
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Shyam Narayan Singh Yadav, scientist at Institute of Photonics Technology, NTU, Taiwan, is passionate about his research on the development of flexible optoelectronic devices utilising 2D materials.

Speaking about his study domain, Yadav says, "The conversion of the optical signal into an electrical signal has become a hot topic of research due to its demands in various fields such as communications, bioimaging, thermal imaging, molecular fingerprinting, remote sensing, and environmental monitoring. These fabrication of advanced optoelectronic devices with noble materials require highly advanced labs, which is available in Taiwan. The students planning to work on similar projects can finish it earlier in Taiwan than that in India

as the faculty focuses on time-bound project completion." Yadav, hailing from a village in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, is working as a postdoctoral fellow at Institute of Photonics Technology, National Tsing Hua University.

His PhD thesis on Plasmonically Enhanced 2D Materials-Based Photodetectors with Superior Optoelectronic Performance in Mid Infrared and Visible Regions, delineates his primary research focus.

### Research options

Taiwan has several world-leading semiconductor industries which have close collaboration with universities for their research and development departments. The students, while working on the projects which is in collaboration with these semiconductor industries, can also learn advanced technology which can help them grow professionally and get jobs after completing their studies. "Taiwan

Taiwan has several world-leading semiconductor industries which have close collaboration with universities for their R&D departments.

— **Shyam Narayan Singh Yadav, scientist**



government and local industries fund the universities for research work. It provides ultrahigh equipped research infrastructure and resources, which makes the process interesting," Yadav adds.

"There are various job opportunities in the semiconductor industries for manufacturing and IC design.

There are several local Taiwanese companies, and their work culture and communication is in Mandarin. So, a student with a knowledge of Mandarin has higher job opportunities," he says.

### Well-structured system

The number of Indian students and skilled workforce has significantly increased in Taiwan in past few years. "Students from India come to Taiwan for studying Engineering with specialisation in Materials Science, Chemical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Power Mechanical Engineering and Biomedical Engineering," says Shyam Narayan.

"Taiwan education infrastructure, including lab facilities for master's/PhD is equivalent to universities in the USA and Europe. Apart from this, Taiwan government and universities offer attractive scholarship to international student which helps student to bear their daily expenses and tuition fee," he says.



## Thanks to supernumerary quota, girl power rules

In the past five years, there has been a rise in the number of female candidates cracking JEE Advanced

Sonal.Srivastava  
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As supernumerary quota for women in IIT undergraduate courses, parental support and encouragement, and better availability of online preparatory resources have increased the number of female candidates cracking the JEE Advanced exam and entering the IIT system.

There are several reasons for the increase in women cracking the JEE Advanced exam foremost among them is the supernumerary quota. "IITs introduced a 20% supernumerary quota in 2018. Over the past five years, it has made it easier for girls to get a branch of their choice in an IIT closer to their hometowns. Earlier, both of these were major concerns. Many girls clearing the JEE Advanced did not join IITs because they wanted to be closer to their homes, and second, they were more particular than boys in the choice of branch. Today, there are enough role models in schools for girls to emulate. They can see how girls from their schools have cracked the exam and think it is within their reach," says Professor Ramgopal Rao, former director, IIT Delhi and Group vice-chancellor of BITS Pilani. "A study conducted by IIT Delhi's faculty members found that 20% of girls qualified for the JEE Advanced exam



before the introduction of the supernumerary quota, but only 8% joined the IITs, and the rest 12% preferred to join the NITs and IIITs. It was mainly for two reasons: they wanted to be close to their homes and were more particular about their choice of branch than boys," adds Rao. Besides the supernumerary quota, the availability of high-quality online preparatory materials enabled female candidates to prepare for one of the toughest exams in the world. "IIT Delhi introduced the IIT-Professor Assisted Learning (IIT-PAL) programme, which was subsequently matched with the SWAYAM portal. Now, several preparatory materials by IIT faculty are available free of cost online. This has also played a major role," adds Rao. IIT-PAL video lectures for classes XI and XII students are prepared by IIT professors/subject experts to help students better understand the subjects and prepare for com-

### Surging figures show promising future

For the JEE Advanced 2024, at least 42,947 female candidates registered; 41,020 appeared and 7,964 cleared the exam. The number of females who cleared the exam in 2024 is higher than in 2023, when 7,509 women cleared the exam. In 2022, at least 35,124 females registered for the exams, 33,608 appeared, and 6,516 qualified for the exam. In 2021, at least 6,452 females qualified for the exam; 35,121 females registered for JEE Advanced 2020, at least 32,851 appeared and 6,707 qualified. Of the total qualified candidates in 2019, over 5,356 were females.

petitive exams. The videos are telecast on the HRD Ministry's Swayam Prabha Channel and can be accessed on Doordarshan DTH Channel 22.

### Pushing the boundaries

Several IITs are running outreach programmes to popularise STEM among school students. "Higher education in Science is an attractive proposition due to the world-

wide focus on Women in STEM. In India, the performance of women students at the school level in Maths and Science has been consistently good, and it is heartening to see the numbers in higher education pick up as well," says Prof Preeti Aghalayam, dean, School of Engineering and Science and director-in-charge, Zanzibar campus, IIT Madras.

## Never repeat mistakes, says Ved, AIR 1 topper

Sonal.Srivastava@timesgroup.com

Ved Lahoti from Indore has broken all previous records in the JEE Advanced exam, achieving the highest marks ever with a score of 355 out of 360, an impressive 98.61%. Securing AIR 1, the 17-year-old now aims to pursue



Ved Lahoti

Computer Science at IIT Bombay. His exceptional performance, particularly in Chemistry and Physics, reflects his strategic focus on conceptual understanding over rote learning. He scored the maximum marks in Chemistry. "The JEE Advanced papers were moderate to tough as usual, but it was relatively easier compared to the past two years. In Physics, I focused more on the conceptual part because if concepts are not clear, you will not be able to solve the problems," says Ved. Hailing from Indore, he studied at SICA Senior Secondary School and Rankers International before moving to Kota to prepare for JEE.

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## Mentorship programmes to hone future leaders

Mentors gain new insights while dealing with mentees, writes **Bhawna Batra**

In today's world, the value of mentorship cannot be overstated. As students navigate the complexities of their academic and future career paths, the guiding hand of a mentor can be a booster of confidence and clarity. Mentorship is a symbiotic relationship that thrives on reciprocal growth. It is more than just answering questions or providing occasional advice.

True mentorship involves a deep, ongoing engagement where both — the mentor and the mentee — engage in a personalised journey. Mentors are advisors, coaches, and role models who share their own professional journeys to help students, often discovering as much about themselves in the process as they teach. Mentors help mentees to plan their career paths and explore their talents. Through this partnership, mentors refine their leadership skills and gain new insights from the fresh, innovative perspectives of their mentees.

### Qualities of mentors

Effective mentors are characterised by several indispensable qualities that enable them to impact their mentees profoundly.

**Active listening:** True mentors dedicate time to understand their mentees' viewpoints, listen to them empathetically without immediate judgment or solutions. This allows for a deeper grasp of the issues at hand and fosters a trusting relationship.

**Empathy and insight:** The best mentors can empathise, anticipate the challenges from the mentees' perspective and offer solutions that resonate on a personal level. This emotional intelligence is critical while guiding young minds.

**Constructive feedback:** Rather than only pointing out flaws or errors, successful mentors provide constructive feedback that encourages growth and learning. They celebrate successes and, more importantly, teach how to learn from failures.

**Future-focused approach:** Instead of focusing overly on current problems, visionary mentors help mentees envision a prosperous future. This forward-thinking approach motivates mentees to transcend temporary setbacks.

Mentorship is more than just an educational strategy; it is a significant commitment to the future of our students. By investing in full-fledged mentorship programmes, organisations can set a new standard in education, one that hones the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and innovators.

[The author is head, corporate relations, Shri Balwant Institute of Technology (SBIT), Sonapat]

## CAREER COUNSELLOR

# Working as financial analyst in a stock firm can help gain practical experience



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

### Careers in stock market

I am a science student and just completed my schooling. I am very keen to do something in the stock market but don't know where to begin because I come from a family of doctors who have no idea of this field.

Sujata Kumar, New Delhi

Following are some actions you can take to pursue a career in our Indian stock market: To begin with, start learning as much as you can about the stock market and the financial sector. A degree in commerce, economics or finance may be a good starting point. Make it a point to watch business-related TV programmes and follow the business sections of the top financial dailies. There are many great books available for beginners on the subject.

Acquiring a qualification such as the Financial Markets certification NCFM from the National Stock Exchange (NSE) or from NISM will give you a leg-up. And this is something you can do alongside your graduation to get an overview of this vast field.

Thereafter, try obtaining practical experience by working as a financial analyst in a stockbroking firm, investment bank, mutual funds, portfolio management services, research firm or any other financial institution to gain a better understanding of the market and develop a network of useful contacts. This will also keep you informed and clued in on new developments and job openings in this volatile and ever-changing field. You may even consider specialising in a specific area of the stock market such as fundamental analysis, technical analysis, or portfolio management. While you are at it, do join online communities and forums to stay connected with other professionals in the industry and avoid pitfalls by learning from their experience.

### Skilling for nurses

I have been practising as a nurse in a leading city hospital. I did go in for postgraduation in my field. Is there any other short-term course I can do to add to my skills?

Nalini Sheshadri, Coimbatore

Just look around you, and at your senior colleagues and your workplace. You will notice that the field of nursing is undergoing a rapid transformation with the integration of digital technologies. This, in turn, opens up great prospects for nurses to develop their careers in this domain. As compared to traditional paper-based data, nurses can now track patient information in real time. Electronic health records, innovative telehealth programmes and virtual care are the future, and you would find it exciting to be part of it. Incorporating Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into healthcare offers multiple benefits — it enables and empowers support clinical staff to deliver the best patient care (even at times obviating the need for patients to visit the clinic/hospital). Do look for reputed programmes, and certifications in this field. Many of them would be online which means you can pursue them in your free time — while you continue with your current job.

As organisations continue to grapple with the implications of launching new technology, all sorts of legal questions are thrown up. Companies increasingly look for legal expertise on what they must consider while launching blockchain technologies. The implications would be

oper in this domain. I have developed a keen interest in Law. Is there any way I can pivot to a confluence of both?

Ajay Bhutani, Mumbai

As organisations continue to grapple with the implications of launching new technology, all sorts of legal questions are thrown up. Companies increasingly look for legal expertise on what they must consider while launching blockchain technologies. The implications would be

### Explore your options

I am a student of NIOS class XII with English, Physics, Biology, Computer, Economics and Sociology. Could you please tell me about the scope of these subjects?

-Yamini Khanna, Chandigarh



You do have a very assorted choice of subjects. Since you do not have Chemistry you cannot opt for Medicine or any of the other Life Sciences. And since you do not have Maths, you cannot go for computers, physical sciences, Economics (Hons) or BCom (Hons). Other than these, you could do a BCom (Gen) or BBA or BA in English,

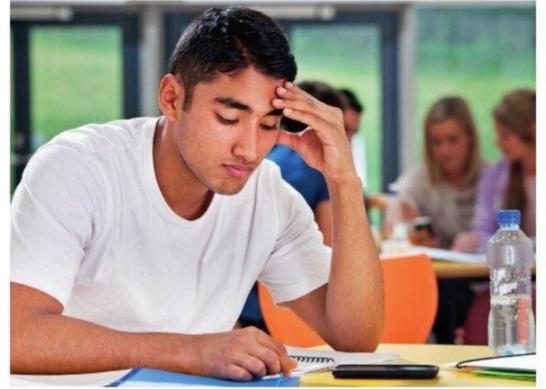
Psychology, Tourism etc that catches your fancy. Moreover, you are free to pursue just about any other profession open to humanities and commerce students, including NDA. Read up and talk to people about various possibilities and options that interest you.

If you do this consistently, you will be amazed how much you pick up. And the more informed you are, the better equipped you will be to rule out several of the inappropriate options and flag the 'possible' ones. After you have found out some more about what is involved in pursuing each of these, you will be able to further pare down the list. What you really need to do at this stage is to try and narrow down your choice(s) to one or two broad options and then concentrate on planning a career around it. Take a good trustworthy psychometric test to help you identify the fields that are most suited to you.

As blockchain technology continues to evolve, so will the professional opportunities around it. You can explore what it would take to become a blockchain attorney or legal consultant. While it is impossible to predict how exactly it will all pan out, those with blockchain expertise like you, will likely be in high demand for many years to come.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLOR

# Pursuing a hobby may lead to a strong career



**DR HARISH SHETTY**  
Child psychiatrist, Mumbai



psychiatric treatment to deal with his recent breakup. Your family need to be educated about his mental state so that you avoid giving him sermons. Do not forget that he needs your support.

### Confusion over career choices

I am in class XII and have been visiting career counsellors to decide about my career. However, I am so confused as I lack clarity on which course should I pick based on my inherent talent. I feel I am good at many things. My parents are pushing me to take up engineering, but I want to pursue archaeology. The pressure from parents is giving me sleepless nights.

-Anonymous

Visit the career counsellor again with your parents and have a series of conversations. This will help the entire family to share feelings and beliefs about their careers. Your parents will understand and learn about archaeology and other non-conventional careers, which will be helpful. This will help the entire family reach a consensus on your career. Your family must respect your career choices, desires, and aspirations. For those who have multiple abilities, I advise them to choose a career wisely and pursue their hobbies simultaneously. Sometimes, one's hobby can lead to a strong career.

### Dealing with breakups

My son (19) has fallen in love with a girl who lives in some other state. He had never met her but claimed to be in love with her. This relationship continued for a while, and after six months, he was admitted to a hospital for alcohol addiction. I found out that he was staying with a friend and was binge drinking after the girl broke up with him. He was diagnosed with bipolar disorder a few years ago but was cured post treatment. Now, we are dealing with another problem.

-PS

### Handling impulsive behaviour

My elder son (17) was arrested in a street brawl case, and was sent to juvenile home. His behaviour has been difficult since he turned a teenager. He is an impulsive boy who would get a lot of complaints from his school teachers. After coming out of the juvenile home, the doctors prescribed a medicine and diagnosed him with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). However, I do not want to give him medicines.

-Anonymous

ADHD children are impulsive and hyperactive. They also have poor attention. His impulsiveness may have led to the brawls and frequent distractions in school. Please give him the medicines and seek clarification on your doubts about his behaviour and medicines. Do not stop his counselling as professional help will change his life.

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## EducationTIMES



### BRAINSTRAIN

>> First three correct entries will win a 'pen drive'. Send in your entries only through e-mail with your Name, Address, Email, Tel no. and Profession to [brainstrain.hyd@gmail.com](mailto:brainstrain.hyd@gmail.com)

Select the word for the blank that best fits the meaning of the sentence:

- He believes in the "if it isn't broken, don't fix it".  
(a) banality (b) sermon (c) maxim (d) canon
- Everywhere on the ranch, they found carnage and wreckage-evidence of the of the cruel criminal.  
(a) courage (b) wantonness (c) ruthlessness (d) audacity
- The young citizens should dedicate themselves to the service of the nation, avoiding all narrowness and  
(a) misogyny (b) dogmatism (c) xenophobia (d) parochialism
- Nature has innumerable gifts on mankind.  
(a) beseeched (b) bestowed (c) enriched (d) bequeathed
- Mt Abu, the only hill station in Rajasthan, is definitely a from the heat of the plains.  
(a) refuge (b) comfort (c) rescue (d) succour
- The authorities appealed to the public to bear with the inconvenience.  
(a) fervently (b) frantically (c) piteously (d) apologetically
- I don't know him personally and so I cannot give you any assurance regarding the of his statement.  
(a) veracity (b) frankness (c) rectitude (d) verbosity
- The striking workers resumed duty, when the management to most of their demands.  
(a) admitted (b) acceded (c) acknowledged (d) resigned
- Those who knew him were astonished to see the change in him as he spoke softly and pleasantly without a hint of his earlier  
(a) deviation (b) brusqueness (c) pithiness (d) silliness
- by his insinuating remarks, his teammates protested vehemently.  
(a) Lured (b) tired (c) repelled (d) annoyed

Answer key for the last week's quiz: 1.(c), 2.(b), 3.(a), 4.(d), 5.(d), 6.(c), 7.(d), 8.(a), 9.(b)

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# Amid multiple crises, UGC allows HEIs to hold biannual admissions

Shuddhanta.Patra  
@timesgroup.com



Focusing on increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), the UGC has decided to allow HEIs in the country to admit students twice a year as opposed to the earlier regulations that permitted students to be admitted only in the July-August admission session. With the new regulations, students can now be admitted in January/February and in July/August academic sessions in undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD programmes. The UGC now leaves it to the institutions to decide if they want to offer admissions in both cycles or just one, and this will depend on their infrastructure and faculty.

In 2023, UGC permitted biannual admissions under Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Online modes in January and July during an academic year. The decision to admit students twice a year was taken after the Commission saw a record increase in the number of students taking admission to colleges in recent years. As per the Commission, this will also help students who miss the first admission deadline save the academic year by taking admission in the next session.

While the purpose of the directive is to increase the GER, academia is worried about the additional burden of two academic cycles. Prof Furqan Qamar, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) University, says, "UGC has now enabled universities to admit students twice a year but the saving grace is it has not made it mandatory. Universities in India are already admitting PhD stu-

dents twice a year but running two admission cycles is a different ball game. The new system calls for adequate facilities and a large number of teachers. It is good to learn from the best practices of the world but we must recognise that these best practices are dependent on certain necessary conditions such as availability of resources, infrastructure and teachers."

Prof BJ Rao, vice chancellor, University of Hyderabad (UoH), says, "The recent decision will increase the GER and also position India as a major educational destination globally. Presently, Indian universities do not train enough students in comparison to other countries. Smaller countries with two or three sessions are generating more qualified students than us. With the proposed system, India too will train and educate more number of students every year."

"But, the universities opting for the new system will have to ensure that both the sessions are academical-

ly well synchronised. The major challenge will be to counter the problem of teacher shortage to cater to students in both sessions. The country, at present,

does not have enough faculty to meet the demand. Currently, the UoH is not in a position to conduct admissions twice a year," adds Prof Rao.

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IIMHR University, Jaipur, is the destination for learning and demonstrating the impact of critical skills that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the most significant and fast-growing sectors – Health and Development – through an innovative learning ecosystem. Our collaborations with universities and organizations empower us to keep pace with our substantial growth. Through learner-led, student-centric, industry-focused, high-quality course content, students are inspired to innovate and advance their learning with peers.

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**To know more about admissions**  
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CHANDIGARH



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