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Over 2.63 lakh candidates participated in NEET-PG; Re-exam announced for candidates at 2 centers in Jaipur

■EJ - Agency
The NEET-PG 2026 was successfully conducted for more than 2.63 lakh candidates across the country on Sunday, but the examination could not be completed at two centres in Rajasthan's Jaipur due to an internal power failure, officials said.

The National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) has scheduled a re-examination for the affected candidates in Jaipur at 3 pm on September 5, according to a notice issued by it.

The NBEMS has also called an immediate meeting to decide the course of action against the technological partner and agency responsible for ensuring adequate infrastructure at the examination centres, officials said.

At the two iON Digital Zone centres in Sitapura, Jaipur, the examination could not be completed for 2,445 candidates due to internal power-supply issues attributable to TCS Ltd, the technological partner and the examination-conducting agency, the health ministry said.

The affected centres are iON Digital Zone iDZ Sitapura (TC Nos. 41682 and 41683).

Further details, including the venue for the re-examination and revised ad-

NTA Strengthens permanent leadership with new appointments

But 197 Contractual & Outsourced personnel remain a key Concern

■EJ - Ravi Arya
The National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts some of India's largest and most sensitive examinations, including NEET-UG, JEE and UGC-NET, is undergoing a major organisational overhaul. The Centre has recently appointed new senior officers and created additional permanent posts to strengthen the agency. However, questions remain over its dependence on contractual and outsourced personnel.

According to information provided by the Union Government in the Rajya Sabha on July 22, 2026, the NTA had 24 permanent officials against 39 sanctioned permanent posts, leaving 15 posts vacant. At the same time, the agency had 73 contractual personnel and 124 outsourced personnel — a total of 197 non-permanent personnel. This means that, according to the July data, the NTA was relying on a significantly larger number of contractual and outsourced personnel than its permanent workforce.

24 Permanent Officials vs 197 Contractual and Outsourced Personnel

The government's data reveal an unusual workforce structure for an institution responsible for examinations involving millions of students.

The NTA's 73 contractual personnel included 44 consultants, 17 Young Professionals, five senior con-



Five New Senior Officers Appointed

The workforce situation is now changing with the Centre's latest appointments.

The government has appointed five senior officers to the NTA as part of the ongoing restructuring of the agency. The move is intended to strengthen administrative capacity and improve the security and credibility of the examination system.

The latest restructuring comes after the government created 16 additional senior posts — eight at the Director level and eight at the Joint Director level — to strengthen the NTA's permanent institutional structure.

The new appointments are significant because they indicate a shift towards strengthening the agency's permanent leadership rather than depending primarily on short-term arrangements.

sultants, three advisers, a Senior Software Developer, a General Manager (Communication), an Office Assistant and other professional positions.

In addition, 124 personnel were outsourced, including data analysts, consultants, junior consultants, legal associates, housekeeping personnel and other support staff.

It is important to clarify that

the presence of contractual or outsourced personnel does not by itself establish that they were

responsible for any paper leak, examination error or other irregularity. However, their numbers and the nature of their responsibilities raise legitimate questions about access to sensitive examination processes, confidentiality, cybersecurity, background verification, supervision and accountability.

Is the NTA Moving Away from Excessive Outsourcing?

This is perhaps the most important question emerging from the restructuring.

The July data showed that the NTA had only 24 occupied permanent posts while engaging 197 contractual and outsourced personnel. The latest reforms, including the creation of 16

senior permanent posts and the induction of senior government officers, suggest that the Centre is attempting to build stronger internal expertise and institutional accountability.

However, the government has not yet publicly provided a revised complete workforce figure showing how many of the earlier contractual and outsourced positions have been replaced following the latest appointments.

Therefore, it would be premature to conclude that outsourcing has been substantially reduced.

Examination team also restructured

The organisational changes extend beyond senior appointments.

The NTA has recently removed around 600 experts from its examination team and begun onboarding new experts. It has also introduced a four-tier scrutiny system for question papers, under which examination papers will undergo multiple levels of checking before an examination is conducted.

The reforms are aimed at reducing errors and strengthening the reliability and security of the question-paper preparation process.

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is making students less intelligent on one hand and more unethical on the other

Teaching is one of my strongest passions and my own research always goes hand in hand with my work with students. The collected volume *Socrates in Russia* (Brill 2022) initially grew out of an undergraduate course I designed and taught at Princeton University, Dartmouth College, and the University of Pittsburgh. This course, titled “Philosophy and Literature: Western Thought and the Slavic Dialogic Imagination,” opens with the Ukrainian philosopher Gregory Skovoroda’s philosophical fragment “Socrates in Russia” and his Platonic dialogue “A Conversation Among Five Travelers Concerning Life’s True Happiness,” which the students perform and reenact in class. Last year, at ASEES in Washington, DC, I presented this methodology for “A Performance Showcase of Creative Research,” titled “From the Footnotes to the Footlights.”

The course “Philosophy and Literature: Western Thought and the Slavic Dialogic Imagination” laid the foundation of the *Socrates in Russia*. This volume explores the influence of the Socratic legacy in the Russian, East European, and Soviet contexts. For writers, philosophers, and artists, Socrates has served as a potent symbol—of the human capacity for philosophical reflection, as well as the tumultuous (and often dangerous) reality in which Russian-speaking and Soviet intellectuals found themselves. The thirteen chapters include surveys of historical periods and movements (the 18th century, Nietzscheanism,



and the “Greek Renaissance” of Russian culture), studies of individual writers and philosophers (Skovoroda, Herzen, Dostoevsky, Rozanov, Bely, Narbut, and many others), and investigations of Socratic subtexts (e.g., in Bulgakov’s *Master and Margarita* and Nosov’s *Neznaika* series for children). The volume concludes with a “Socratic Texts” section of new translations Alyssa DeBlasio and I completed, including Tolstoy’s biographies of Gregory Skovoroda and his “The Greek teacher Socrates.” The plurality of these topics demonstrates the continued relevance of the Socratic myth not only for Russian-speaking culture, but for the world. The *Socrates in Russia* volume has

resulted in several additional collaborative projects. Our next volume, titled *Socratic Women*, which considers women writers, thinkers, and philosophers, as well as female characters in Russian literature, who could be seen as possible reincarnations of such figures as Diotima of Mantinea, Aspasia of Miletus, and Socrates himself. We see this project as addressing a broader need in our field to complement text-centric studies with figure-studies. This opens a space for diversity, in that women and other marginalized figures in the 19th century were not necessarily the producers of texts but were certainly the producers of ideas.

My commitment to interdisciplinarity underlies both my teaching and research agenda. Currently, in addition to four levels of Russian

at Johns Hopkins University, including an advanced seminar “Readings in Russian Studies,” I am teaching a new content course of my own design titled “Disciplines Without Borders:” Multidisciplinarity in Literature, Art, and Sciences. This introductory course explores the intersections between literary texts, scientific discoveries, and art. We study Geometry, Calculus, Probability Theory, Philosophy, Cognitive Science, Medicine, and Ecology in Russian Literature. We read novels, poems, and plays by Goethe, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Akhmatova, and Nabokov, among others, with relevant chapters from *The Mathematical Mind* of F. M. Dostoevsky: *Imaginary Numbers*, *Non-Euclidean Geometry*,



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and *Infinity* by Michael Marsh-Soloway; *Russian Literature and Cognitive Science* edited by Tom Dolack; *Medical Storyworlds: Health, Illness, and Bodies in Russian and European Literature* at the Turn of the Twentieth Century by Elena Fratto, among others. We will also have guest lecturers from the departments of philosophy, mathematics, and cognitive science as we consider philosophy as science and science as art and explore multidisciplinary and the many ways in which sciences can transform our understanding of art and literature and vice versa.

My research interests include German Idealism and Russian Realism, nineteenth-century Russian literature, the Faustian legacy in Russia and Eastern Europe, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, aesthetics, philosophy of emo-

tion and cognition in literature, the theory of the novel, Bakhtin, theater, poetry, and translation. My expertise in the literatures and cultures of other Slavic and Eurasian peoples includes Armenian as well as Ukrainian. I have published and lectured on Ukrainian dissident movements at New York University and Sacramento Historical Society. I have travelled extensively in Ukraine and have conducted research and interviews at the Literature Museum of Odessa, the Philosophy Department of Odessa National University, Museum of Dissident Movement in Kiev, and the Parajanov Art Center. Among Armenian thinkers and writers, I am particularly interested in Hovhannes Tumanian, Zabel Yesayan, and Valery Brusov’s translations of Armenian poetry into Russian, which include Sayat-Nova’s poems and songs, also immortalized in Sergei Parajanov’s masterpiece *The Color of Pomegranates*.

Building inclusive communities has been central to my teaching and research. As an immigrant from Armenia and Russia, I understand personally the difficulty of navigating a majoritarian culture for someone from the outside. I had to do this in my teenage years as an immigrant in Russia, and then again in my twenties as a first-generation immigrant in the United States. As someone who has had to find her voice in three very different cultures, I am especially sensitive to questions of gender, racism, and otherness. My teaching is therefore inherently intercultural and inclusive: I try to show and help students understand how the act of communication (reading, writing, speaking) and art can bridge gaps between humans of radically different worlds. I am committed to participating in and helping to build a diverse curriculum that recognizes the complex realities

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Stop Chasing Success — Start Building Capability: Because when you grow within, the world rewards you from without

The Trap We All Fall Into

There’s a story playing out in millions of lives every single day.

A student stares at their marksheet, measuring their worth in percentages. A young professional refreshes their bank account after appraisal season, calculating whether they’ve “made it.” A mid-career executive watches a colleague get promoted and quietly wonders — “Why not me?” We are all, in one way or another, chasing success. And here’s the uncomfortable truth — *most of us are chasing the wrong thing.*

We’re chasing the reflection of success, not its source.

The Illusion of Success as a Destination

For students, success has been neatly packaged into grades, ranks, and college admissions. The question isn’t “What did you learn?” — it’s “*What did you score?*”

For working professionals, the packaging changes but the obsession remains. Success becomes a salary figure, a job title, a corner office. The conversation at every family gathering circles back to the same questions — “*Got a promotion? Salary badh gayi?*”

Society has trained us to worship outcomes while completely ignoring the process that makes outcomes possible.

But here’s what nobody tells



you in school, in college, or in your first performance review: *Success is not a destination you arrive at. It is a natural consequence of who you become.*

The Ancient Wisdom We Forgot

Long before modern self-help books and productivity gurus, Hindu philosophy had already cracked this code — with breathtaking elegance.

There is a profound belief rooted in Indian spiritual tradition:

“*Pray to Goddess Saraswati — the goddess of knowledge, wisdom, and learning — and Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, will follow on her own.*”

Saraswati represents *capability* — learning, skill, knowl-

edge, creativity, and wisdom. Lakshmi represents prosperity — wealth, success, recognition, and abundance.

The ancient sages weren’t just offering a religious metaphor. They were laying down one of the most timeless laws of human achievement:

Develop yourself first. Abundance follows capability.

Always

When you devote yourself to learning, growing, and mastering your craft, prosperity doesn’t need to be begged for — it is drawn to you like iron to a magnet. Our ancestors understood what modern psychology is only now beginning to confirm.

For Students — *Stop Studying for Grades, Start Learning for Life*

Let’s be honest. The education system pressures students into a



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single-minded pursuit of marks. But here’s a question worth sitting with —

A student who scored 95% by memorizing the night before the exam, and a student who scored 78% but genuinely understood and applied every concept — five years from now, who would you rather be?

Grades are a *lagging indicator* — they tell you what happened. But your *skills, curiosity, and depth of understanding* are the *leading indicators* — they determine what will happen.

When you chase grades, you study for the examiner. When you chase capabilities, you study for yourself — and for life.

What to chase instead:

- **Deep understanding** over surface-level memorization
- **Problem-solving ability** over

textbook answers

- **Communication and critical thinking** over rote recall
- **Consistent learning habits** over last-minute cramming
- **Curiosity** — the greatest skill of all

The students who go on to build remarkable careers and lives are rarely those who had the highest GPAs. They are the ones who were genuinely *hungry to know more, do more, and become more.*

For Working Professionals — It’s Time to Redefine Growth

And now, let’s talk about the most misunderstood word in every professional’s vocabulary:

Growth

Ask ten professionals what growth means to them, and nine will answer in one of two ways — “A better salary” or “A higher designation.”

What Growth Actually Means

What We Think Growth Is

Salary hike
Designation change
A bigger team
Corner office

What Growth Actually Is

Expansion of your mental faculty
Deepening of your expertise
Sharpening of your leadership and empathy
Growth in your ability to create value

That is not growth. *That is recognition of growth* — and there is a world of difference between the two.

his appraisal is due. He does his work — competently, reliably — but nothing more.

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But 197 Contractual & Outsourced personnel remain a key Concern

■ EJ - Ravi Arya

These questions are important not because contractual employment is inherently problematic, but because the security and integrity of a national examination system depend on clearly defined responsibility and accountability.

The Bigger Issue: Institutional Capacity

Since its establishment in 2018, the NTA has conducted more than 270 examinations involving over 6.6 crore candidate registrations.

An organisation operating at this scale requires not only technology and examination infrastructure but also a strong permanent institutional workforce capable of retaining expertise, monitoring processes and fixing responsibility when something goes wrong.

The latest appointments, creation of additional senior posts, restructuring of the examination team and introduction of four-tier question-paper scrutiny are important steps.

But the larger question remains:

Can the NTA build a sufficiently strong permanent institutional structure so that a high-stakes examination system involving millions of students is not excessively dependent on contractual and outsourced manpower?

For students and parents, the expectation is straightforward — examinations must be secure, transparent, technologically robust, error-free and accountable.

The latest restructuring may be the beginning of that process. Its



Five Questions That Still Need Answers

1. Why did an agency conducting examinations for millions of students have only 24 occupied permanent posts?
2. What exact responsibilities were assigned to the 73 contractual personnel and 124 outsourced personnel?
3. Which of these personnel had access to sensitive examination data, question-paper preparation, technology systems or confidential information?
4. What background verification, cybersecurity safeguards and accountability mechanisms were applicable to contractual and outsourced personnel?
5. After the latest appointments and creation of 16 new posts, how many contractual and outsourced positions will continue to remain in the NTA?

real success, however, will be measured by whether it restores public confidence in India's national examination system.

KIET Hosts 10th International Conference on AI Innovation

■ EJ - Ghaziabad

KIET School of Management (KSOM), KIET University, successfully hosted the 10th International Conference – ICRIP'2K26 on "Redefining Innovative Practices in the Age of AI" on 21–22 August 2026. The two-day international conference brought together eminent academicians, researchers, industry experts and scholars to deliberate on the rapidly evolving role of Artificial Intelligence in business, education, healthcare, governance, sustainability and society. The conference was organised by KIET School of Management in collaboration with Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU), USA; INTI International University & Colleges, Malaysia; and The George Washington University, USA, reflecting the institution's growing emphasis on international academic collaboration and knowledge exchange.

The conference was graced by Dr. Vinita Singh Sahay, Director, IIM Bodh Gaya, as the Chief Guest. The distinguished Guests of Honour included Dr. Peeyush Pandey,



IPM Chair Person, IIM Rohtak; Dr. Ajay Jain, Professor, MDI Gurugram and Ex Director, MDI Murshidabad; Dr. Segufta Yasmi Binti Abdul Rahman, Head of Program (MBALS) at INTI International University, Malaysia; Dr. Amanda Evert, Professor & Business Department Chair, SWOSU, USA; Ms. Regina Nitin, Regional Head, School of Business, The George Washington University, United States; and Dr. Sarika Tyagi, Guildhall School of Business & Law, London Metropolitan University, London.

The inaugural session set the tone for meaningful discussions on how Artificial Intelligence is reshaping conventional approaches to innovation, strategy, management and sustainable development. The conference also received the encouragement and guidance of Prof. Nagaraj Ramrao, Vice Chancellor, KIET University, whose vision for academic excellence, innovation and future-ready education continues to strengthen KIET's commitment to emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence and

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GNIOT Group organized the grand 'Navankur 2026' orientation program



■ EJ - Gr. Noida

The MBA Institute of GNIOT Group of Institutions, Greater Noida, organised the grand three-day 'Navankur 2026 – Orientation Programme' to provide newly admitted MBA and Integrated MBA students with an inspiring beginning to their academic and professional journey. Held on the theme "New Beginnings, New Aspirations," the programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from around 1,000 students.

The three-day orientation focused on academic learning as well as emerging industry requirements, leadership, innovation, technological transformation, professional skills, personality development, and future career opportunities.

The programme was graced by Anurag Singh Thakur, five-time Lok Sabha Member of Parliament, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Coal, Mines and Steel, former Union Minister, and former National President of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha. Addressing the students, Thakur said that the beginning of their MBA journey marked a new chapter in their lives. He emphasised that a degree alone was not sufficient in today's competitive environment and urged students to develop

knowledge, skills, discipline, leadership, communication, innovation and a sense of national responsibility.

He further highlighted the growing impact of technology, artificial intelligence, digital transformation and global competition, encouraging students to remain curious, continuously learn and prepare themselves for real-life challenges. He urged young people to become not only job seekers but also job creators, innovators and problem-solvers contributing to the development of a Viksit Bharat.

Anand Mishra, MLA from Buxar, Bihar and former IPS officer, also addressed the students and spoke about leadership, discipline, determination and social responsibility. Drawing upon his administrative experience, he stressed the importance of taking responsibility, setting clear goals and treating failures as opportunities to learn and improve.

Several eminent professionals and industry experts interacted with the students. Harshvardhan Jain, motivational speaker, business coach and digital content creator, spoke about positive thinking and perseverance. Dr. Swampreet Singh, AVP (HR) and Campus Lead, ICICI Lombard, discussed employability and

corporate skills. Rajiv Naithani, Chief People Officer, Persistent Systems, highlighted technological change and future workplace requirements, while Nimisha Pathak, General Manager, Samsung Electronics, spoke about corporate culture, digital transformation and innovation. Actor and poet Dinesh Bavra entertained students through a unique blend of poetry, humour and performance.

Dr. Anshul Sharma, Director of the MBA Institute, welcomed the students and highlighted the institute's focus on industry-academia collaboration and holistic development.

GNIOT Group Chairman Dr. Rajesh Kumar Gupta, Vice President Gaurav Gupta, CEO Swadesh Kumar Singh, and Management Member Vansh Gupta also extended their best wishes and encouraged students to make the most of the academic, corporate and co-curricular opportunities available at the institution.

The successful conclusion of 'Navankur 2026' marked an energetic and inspiring beginning to the students' academic and professional journey, reinforcing GNIOT's commitment to quality management education, skill development, innovation and holistic career growth.

NCERT reconstitutes political science Textbook team, four have RSS links

■ EJ - New Delhi

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has reconstituted its textbook development team for Classes 11 and 12 political science, assigning it the task of incorporating cultural rootedness, Indian knowledge systems and inclusion into the new books.

The team has been asked to complete the Class 11 textbook by November this year and the Class 12 textbook by July next year. It will be headed by academic and political analyst Sandeep Shastri, vice president of Kamataka-based Nitte deemed university.

At least four members of the 24-member team have docu-



mented direct or indirect links with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), its student organisation Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), or the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Yadunath Deshpande, currently a senior consultant with the Ministry of Education, has held organisational positions in the ABVP. The organisation's records iden-

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Govt: 4-tier paper checking system, new experts, CISF-secured offices



■ EJ - New Delhi

The government on announced a major overhaul of the examination system at the National Testing Agency, including a four-tier paper checking process, removal of 600 experts along with onboarding of new ones and CISF-secured office premises.

Under fire over the recent lapses in the UGC NET papers and earlier the NEET-UG exam paper leak, the Education Ministry has gone into overdrive to set things in order.

After a meeting chaired on by Education minister Pralhad Joshi, who came in after his predecessor Dharmendra Pradhan had to

resign following protests over the NEET-UG paper fiasco, the Ministry announced this evening that Joshi had directed that all necessary security and related infrastructural facilities should be put in place for the smooth conduct of examinations.

Following directions from the Minister, NTA Director General Abhishek Singh apprised the ministry of actions taken by the Agency, which is responsible for several examinations in the country. "A revamp of the examination team was undertaken with 600 experts being removed and new experts being onboarded," the ministry said while listing out the steps taken so far.

A four-tier question paper checking system will also be put in place to strengthen the scrutiny of examination papers, it added. Besides, 20-25 officials will be inducted in the next two to three weeks, while further induction plan was also reviewed.

Also, NTA offices will be shifted to new premises on a war-footing, where security will be reinforced with CISF teams, the ministry said. Sources said the NTA office will be moved to Minto Road from Okhla in the national capital.

The decisions come after the NTA faced renewed flak from Opposition parties and several protesting student groups following the Sun day night announcement of the re-test for the UGC-NET examination for scholars. They were demanding that the NTA be scrapped, saying its "repeated lapses" have put students' academic and career plans at risk. NTA sources, however, asserted that it had acted in the interest of students and said internal processes and protocols are being reviewed to ensure that all exams are fair and error-free in the future.

NMC asks foreign medical students to apply for eligibility certificates

■ EJ - New Delhi

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has invited candidates to apply online for an eligibility certificate for the upcoming Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) Screening Test in order to appear for the exam.

The application portal will open on September 1, 2026 from 10 am. Candidates can check the official website of National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) at nbe.edu.in to obtain the eligibility certificate.

The last date to apply for the eligibility certificate is September 30, 2026 till 6 pm, the notice issued on August 28 said.

The public notice has come in view of the fact that the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences may schedule the FMGE Screening Test in the coming months.

For that, the candidates must possess the eligibility certificate issued by the NMC to apply for

DU's 2026 UG admissions face vacancies

■ EJ - New Delhi

Delhi University's 2026 undergraduate admission process appears to be entering an unusual phase, with several colleges opening admissions on the basis of Class XII marks even as the university continues with a Spot Round to fill vacant seats. The development raises questions over the extent to which DU has been able to fill its undergraduate seats through the regular CSAS process.

The university's August 23 public notice expanded merit-based admissions, allowing students to apply on Class XII marks for selected programmes at Indraprastha College for Women, Mata Sundri College, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College, Sri Aurobindo College (Evening), Motilal Nehru College (Evening), Shyam Lal College (Evening), Ramanujan College, Bhaskaracharya College and Gargi College.



the screening test.

It is also informed that the applicants can make enquiries about status of the Eligibility application at eligibility.regn@nmc.org.in and eligibility@nmc.org.in

However while making such enquiries, all the candidates are requested to invariably provide their file tracking number, which was generated while submitting the application to NMC for issuance of eligibility certificate.

"It may please be noted that no response would be sent to the candidate in the absence of a file tracking number," it said.

"Accordingly, all candidates are

Over 2.63 lakh...

NBEMS Command Centre at its headquarters in Delhi's Dwarka. A dedicated team of 190 personnel from the NBEMS and TCS was deployed for real-time surveillance and monitoring, the ministry said.

At the dedicated Command Centre at the NBEMS headquarters, officials from the board, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, BEL, ECIL and TCS maintained close and continuous oversight of the examination process throughout the day, it said.

As part of the measures to further strengthen examination security and prevent impersonation, Aadhaar-based authentication of candidates was successfully undertaken at the examination centres.

Government agencies extended their full support towards the secure and orderly conduct of the examination, the ministry said.

The NBEMS deeply regretted the inconvenience caused to the affected candidates and said it has taken prompt steps to ensure that they are provided a fair and equitable opportunity to appear in the NEET-PG 2026.

Number of Indian students...

hybrid programs, differs significantly from the affordable, employment-focused opportunity marketed to them.

A March 2026 DW documentary, *The Cost of a Dream: Indian Students in Germany*, documented cases of students facing debt, insecure employment and immigration uncertainty after enrolling in such programs.

One student featured in the report paid around €500 per month in tuition and €450 for a shared room and worked in a restaurant to meet his costs after depositing €11,904 in a blocked account as proof of sufficient funds.

The concerns have also surfaced in a wider dispute involving IU International University of Applied Sciences in Berlin.

By January 2026, around 300 international students enrolled in its hybrid programs had reportedly received notices affecting their right to remain in Germany. The notices had been issued from March 2025 onwards after the city's immigration authority concluded that physical presence in the country was not essential to completing their studies.

IU said the authority changed its approach to visas for hybrid programs without informing the university and said it would adjust its provision to meet face-to-face teaching requirements. In March 2026, the Berlin Administrative Court suspended a deportation order against one IU student, although a conflicting earlier ruling left the broader legal position unresolved.

The cases underline the distinction between Germany's largely low-cost public university system and its fee-charging private providers, as well as the need for students to verify the delivery model and immigration eligibility of individual programs before

can make today is not a new course, a new certification, or a new resolution. It is a change in the question you wake up asking. Instead of:

"How do I get that promotion?"
"When will my salary increase?"
"Why did they choose someone else?"

Ask yourself:

"What can I learn today that I didn't know yesterday?" "How can I become more capable, more valuable, more skilled by Friday?" "What problem can I solve that no one else here can?"

That single shift — from outcome-obsession to capability-building — is where transformation begins.

Closing Thought — Let Success Chase You

Success is not indifferent to you. It is not randomly assigned. It is not a lottery.

Success is a response. It responds to value. It responds to skill. It responds to growth. It responds to capability.

Stop running after it breathlessly, measuring yourself against it daily, and feeling defeated when it feels far away. Instead — build yourself. Invest in your mind. Sharpen your skills. Learn relentlessly. Grow quietly but consistently.

Pray to Saraswati with everything you have.

And watch — with grace, with inevitability, with the certainty of a law of nature — as Lakshmi finds her way to you.

Because the greatest professionals — and the greatest human beings — are not those who chased success the hardest. They are those who became so genuinely capable, so deeply skilled, so continuously growing, that success simply had no choice but to follow.

enrolling.

Germany is also introducing an additional assessment requirement for some Indian applicants.

From the summer semester of 2027, the Digital Master Test will become part of APS documentation for selected Indian master's applicants whose previous degrees are in engineering, commerce, accounting, finance, economics, business or management.

The computer-based assessment is intended to give German universities a standardised reference point when considering applicants from India's large and varied higher education system. It will not replace APS document verification, degree recognition or universities' own admissions processes.

"The dMAT should not be understood as a simple pass/fail barrier. A low score does not automatically prevent the issuance

NCERT...

tify him as its former joint state organising secretary for Maharashtra and later as an organising secretary in its Mumbai-Konkan structure. His LinkedIn profile also identifies him as a political consultant for the BJP.

Prashant Divekar has been associated with Pune-based Jnana Prabodhini, an RSS-affiliated institution founded in 1962 by Vinayak Vishwanath, an RSS member and pracharak. On the National Council for Teacher Education's National Mission for Mentoring portal, Divekar describes his approach as being "rooted in Bhartiya educational philosophy" and says he has contributed to the National Curriculum Framework.

Vandana Mishra, a professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University's Centre for Political Studies, is a former national secretary of the ABVP. Another JNU academic, Ravi Ramesh Chandra Shukla, is an associate professor at the Centre for Comparative Politics and Political Theory. He has served on the editorial board of the Indian Journal of Democratic Governance, published by the Indian Institute of Democratic Leadership-Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, an RSS affiliate. Devendra Fadnis became the institute's president in 2021.

Shukla has also researched cultural and spiritual nationalism and is principal investigator of an ICSSR-funded JNU project on the role of the Kumbha and Magh Mela in shaping the "Spiritual and Cultural Nationalism of Bharat".

Other members include academics and educators from JNU, National Law University, Chanakya University, Delhi University, IGNOU, National University of Study and Research in Law, Jindal Global Law School, Pondicherry University and Utkal University. NCERT officials Savita Sagar, Vanthangpui Khobung and Subhash Singh are also part of the team, with Khobung serving as member coordinator and Singh as co-coordinator.

According to the NCERT notification issued by Director Dinesh Prasad Saklani, the team will work with curricular area groups covering social science, languages, Indian knowledge systems, environmental education, innovative pedagogy and teaching-learning material. It will also consult other groups to establish links across grades, strengthen interdisciplinarity and incorporate multilingual perspectives.

The notification said each textbook would undergo review for the integration of cross-cutting themes, including cultural rootedness, Indian knowledge systems, inclusion, educational technology and assessment.

of an APS certificate, provided the other APS requirements are met," a German Embassy spokesperson previously said.

KIET Hosts...

digital transformation. Dr. Manoj Goel (Pro VC), Dr. Adesh Kumar Pandey, Director Academics, KIET University, and Dr. Binkey Srivastava, Dean, KIET School of Management, extended their valuable support and leadership towards the successful organisation of the international conference. The conference provided a vibrant academic platform for researchers and scholars to present their research and exchange ideas on the opportunities and challenges emerging from the rapid advancement of AI. Twelve technical tracks and more than 100 papers were presented to explore AI applications from multidisciplinary perspectives.

The Valedictory Session marked the successful culmination of the two-day international conference. Vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Ranchay Bhateja (Program Head). The conference concluded with a renewed commitment to strengthening research, collaboration and innovation in the age of Artificial Intelligence. The successful execution of ICRIP'2K26 reflects the collective commitment of the Conveners Dr. Mani Tyagi and Dr. Meenakshi Tyagi and the organising team. This conference is a renewed commitment to research excellence, innovation, global collaboration and responsible AI-driven transformation.

Artificial Intelligence...

and legacies of the Russian language throughout Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

Despite all this, not only is basic survival in academia becoming increasingly difficult both financially and physically but the student use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is adding insult to injury. It is extremely disheartening when as a teacher you spend hours and weeks of your life developing particular research topics and/or creative projects for each student, and then some of them turn in AI generated papers or presentations, which you know have taken them no more than 5 to 10 minutes. Usually, these are the same students who later complain even about such generous grades as an A (yes, they want an A+!), A-, or B+. Moreover, some of them allow themselves to write the most disrespectful and insulting comments in their anonymous student evaluations as if they are reviewing a robot or a machine rather than a human being who has poured their blood and sweat and decades of research into educating them. I have been too spoiled with stellar student evaluations over my 15 years of teaching all over the US and the world. So, I am in utter awe of both how students think they can simply fool us with new technology, while cheating themselves from the joy and benefits of learning and how inhumane they themselves become in consequence. I went into teaching and academic to follow my passion after successful careers in journalism and Public Relations, and I never expected that I would even entertain yet another career change, but AI might end up depriving us of the joy of teaching and any human aspects of this important profession.

Skill Education is the New Global Currency

The landscape of global education is undergoing a profound transformation. For generations, the traditional formula for success seemed clear: attend school, memorize knowledge, earn a university degree, and secure a stable career. However, in the era of digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and rapid technological change, this model is facing significant challenges.

Today's world values not only what people know but also what they can do with what they know. Knowledge remains essential, but without the ability to apply it, adapt to new situations, and solve complex problems, knowledge alone is no longer enough.

As an educator, I have witnessed firsthand that student success can no longer be measured only by grades or examination results. A learner may achieve excellent academic performance while still facing difficulties in communication, creativity, teamwork, and real-world problem-solving. Modern education must therefore move beyond the simple transmission of information and focus on developing individuals who can transform knowledge into meaningful action.

This shift is especially important for developing countries, where educational progress must be connected more closely with labor market needs. Despite the growing number of university graduates, many young people still experience difficulties entering the workforce due to a lack of practical experience and essential professional skills. The missing link is clear: skill education and career development.

Across the world, universities graduate millions of students every year. However, employers frequently express the same concern: "We cannot find can-



didates with the skills we need." This contradiction reveals a growing gap between academic education and workplace expectations. Traditional learning models often emphasize memorization and theoretical knowledge, helping students succeed in examinations but not always preparing them for real-life challenges. When young professionals enter the modern workplace, they are not given multiple-choice questions. They are asked to manage projects, communicate with teams, solve unexpected problems, use technology effectively, and create innovative solutions. Skill-based education addresses this gap by shifting learning from passive knowledge acquisition to active competence development. It encourages students to experiment, create, collaborate, and apply their knowledge in practical contexts.

For many years, the concept of "skill education" was mistakenly associated only with vocational training and was sometimes

viewed as an alternative path for students who did not follow traditional academic routes. This perception is outdated. In today's economy, skills are essential for everyone – regardless of profession, educational background, or career goals.

Skill development can be divided into three major categories:

Technical and Professional Skills

These are specific, measurable abilities required for particular fields. They include programming, data analysis, artificial intelligence applications, digital technologies, healthcare assistance, modern agriculture, engineering, and many other professional competencies. Technical skills provide individuals with the practical tools needed to perform effectively in their chosen careers.

Soft Skills: The Human Advantage

As artificial intelligence and

automation continue to replace routine tasks, uniquely human abilities are becoming increasingly valuable. These include:

- Communication;
- Emotional intelligence;
- Teamwork;
- Leadership;
- Creativity;
- Adaptability.

A highly skilled professional who cannot communicate effectively, collaborate with others, or adapt to change may struggle in today's competitive environment.

Cognitive and Meta-Skills: The Ability to Keep Learning

Perhaps the most important skill of the 21st century is learnability – the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn. Critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and cognitive flexibility allow individuals to respond successfully to technological changes and evolving professional demands.

As Alvin Toffler famously stated: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

Skill Education as a Tool for Economic Empowerment

Skill-based education is not only an educational priority; it is also an economic necessity. When young people develop relevant skills, they become more than job



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seekers – they become innovators, entrepreneurs, and creators of new opportunities. Practical education strengthens economic growth by preparing individuals for industries that require modern competencies. It also creates a more inclusive system where success depends not only on the reputation of a university but on a person's actual abilities and achievements. Short-term certifications, professional training programs, internships, and micro-credentials are becoming valuable pathways to employment because they provide targeted skills that directly respond to labor market needs.

The Role of Schools, Teachers, Industry, and Policy

Creating a future-ready education system requires cooperation among three essential pillars: educational institutions, educators, and industry. Educational institutions must integrate more experiential learning into everyday education. Project-based learning, practical assignments, internships, and interactive learning environments should complement traditional academic methods. Students should not only receive information; they should learn how to analyze, create, communicate, and solve problems.

The Changing Role of Teachers

At the center of educational transformation stands the teacher. The role of the 21st-century educator is no longer limited to delivering information. Teachers have become mentors, facilitators, and guides who help

students develop independent thinking, confidence, creativity, and lifelong learning habits. Continuous professional development for teachers is essential because educators themselves must constantly adapt to new technologies, methodologies, and social changes.

Industry Collaboration

Businesses also have a crucial role to play. Instead of simply criticizing graduates for lacking skills, industries should actively collaborate with schools and universities. Partnerships between education and business can help develop relevant curricula, create mentorship opportunities, provide internships, and introduce students to real-world professional challenges.

Policy Reform in Georgia

Georgia has taken important steps toward integrating practical and vocational skills into the education system. Initiatives aimed at strengthening career education and connecting learning with real-world competencies represent important progress. However, the success of these reforms depends on strong infrastructure, modern learning resources, and continuous investment in teacher training.

Building the Future Through Skills

Bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills is not only an educational challenge; it is an economic and social necessity. In the world where change is accelerating every day, skill education is no longer an additional advantage – it is a fundamental requirement for personal and professional survival. Education should not only prepare students to pass exams; it should prepare them for life, career transformation, and continuous growth. By redefining education as the "new global currency," we can empower young people to move beyond being simple degree holders and become active creators, innovators, entrepreneurs, and adaptable leaders who shape the future. The future will belong to those who can continue learning, embrace change, and turn knowledge into action.

Number of Indian students in Germany rises to record-high 70k



■ **EJ - Agency**

Indian enrolments at German universities rose by 17.5% to a record 69,816 in the winter semester 2025/26, making Indians the country's largest international student group.

Almost 10,400 Indian students were added in a single year, according to figures highlighted by DAAD India, reflecting growing demand for Germany's relatively affordable higher education, research opportunities, industry connections and graduate career pathways.

Germany now has 2,864,160 university students, including 516,820 students with foreign citizenship, according to the latest figures. International students

account for 18% of the total university population.

Indian students represent 13.5% of Germany's international student population and 2.4% of its overall student population.

DAAD India described the figures as evidence of the deepening academic and scientific relationship between Germany and India, with growing numbers of students choosing the country not only to obtain degrees but also to pursue research, innovation and international careers.

"As Germany's international student community continues to grow, the strong presence of Indian students stands out as one of the great success stories of international academic mobility and a

testament to the enduring partnership between our two countries," it said.

The increase comes as rising costs, visa uncertainty and changing post-study work policies in the US, UK, Canada and Australia lead more Indian students to consider alternative destinations.

"Germany offers globally respected degrees without the \$60,000-\$100,000 debt load associated with the US or UK, which fundamentally changes the risk calculus for a middle-income family," Divyansh Chaudhari, founder of TerraTem, previously told The PIE.

Most German public universities do not charge tuition fees, although students generally pay semester contributions and exceptions apply. This has made the country especially attractive to families seeking to limit borrowing.

Germany's expanding selection of English-taught programs and comparatively transparent post-study work and skilled-migration routes have also helped broaden demand.

However, the headline growth comes amid concerns that the experience of some Indian students, particularly those entering fee-charging private and

>> **Contd. p.4...**



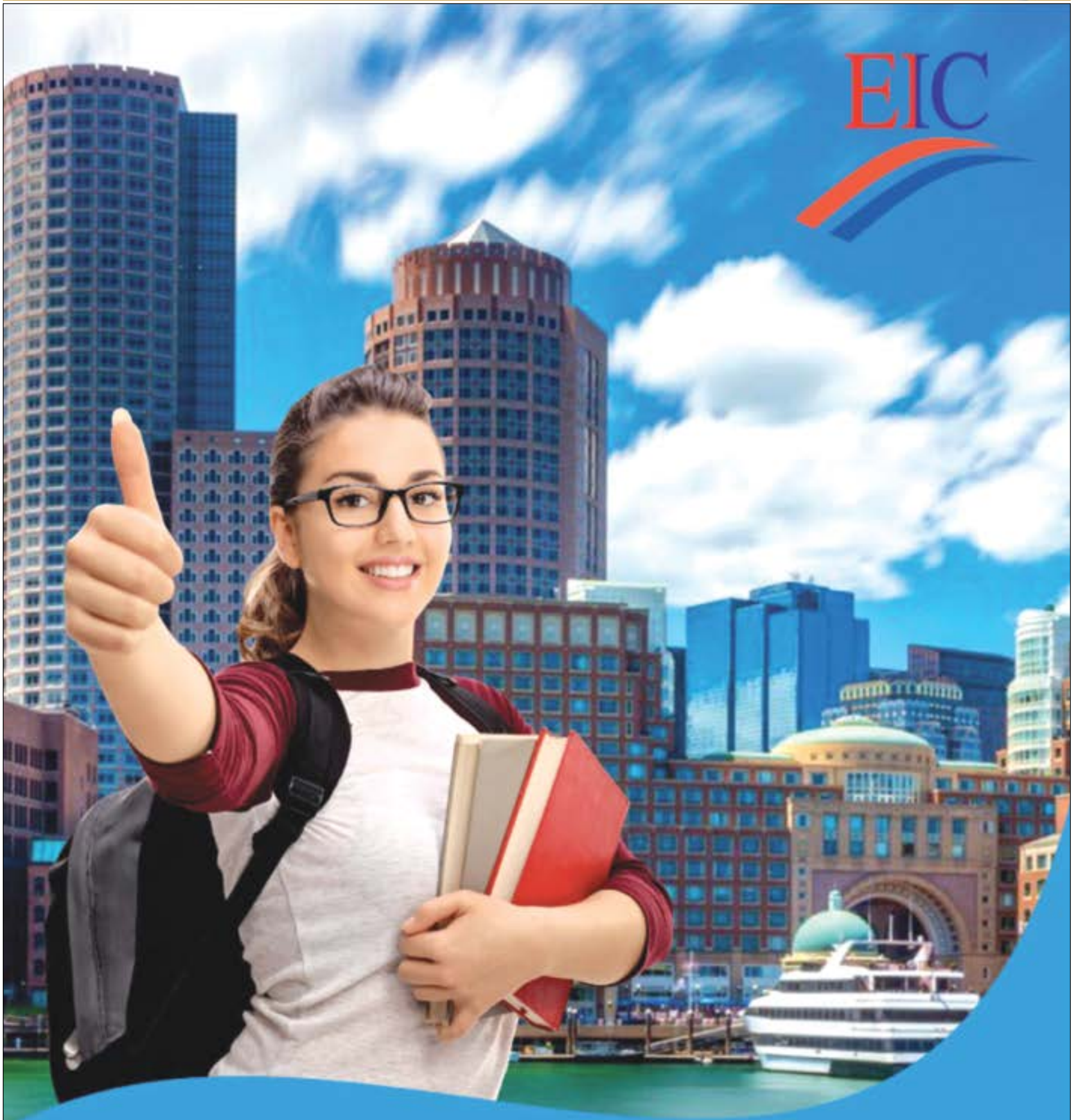
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