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LPU Campus Unrest: From Rumour to Violence, Questions Raised Over Student Safety and University



EJ - Ashu Tyagi Phagwara
A student protest at Lovely Professional University (LPU) turned violent on September 27, creating a tense situation on the campus and surrounding areas. A message circulating on social media regarding an alleged sexual assault involving a female student led to a large number of students gathering in protest. However, the original allegation has not been independently verified, and the police are investigating the matter.
As the situation escalated, incidents of vandalism and vehicles being set on fire were reported on and around the university campus. Protesters sub-

sequently moved outside the university and blocked the Jalandhar-Phagwara National Highway (NH-44), disrupting traffic for several hours. Clashes and stone-pelting were also reported between protesters and police as authorities attempted to control the situation and clear the highway.
Following the incident, the police registered a case and launched an investigation. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted to examine various

Key Facts:

- September 27: A student protest at LPU turned violent.
- NH-44: The protest disrupted traffic on the Jalandhar-Phagwara National Highway.
- SIT Investigation: Police constituted a Special Investigation Team to investigate the matter.
- Academic Impact: The university suspended classes for 10 days and postponed scheduled examinations.

aspects of the matter, including the allegations circulated on social media, the violence, arson and damage to public and private property. The police are also examining whether any outsiders were involved in the protests.
Following the violence, the university administration announced the suspension of regular classes for 10 days and postponed scheduled examinations. A large num-
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NCERT's three-year journey: Status achieved, the real test begins

EJ - Ravi Arya
Three years after the Centre announced its plan to transform the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) into an Institution Deemed to be University, the country's premier school-education institution has crossed an important institutional milestone. Yet, the larger question remains: how much of the promised academic transformation is now visible on the ground?



KEY FACTS

- Deemed-to-be-University status: 30 March 2026
- Sanctioned NCERT posts: 2,844
- Filled posts: 1,248
- Vacant posts: 1,596
- New academic focus: Research, doctoral and innovative programmes
- Scheduled Languages covered in major textbook translation: 22
- Indian-language primers developed: 121
- Tribal languages included: 93

constituent Regional Institutes of Education are also part of the new institutional framework.
There has been substantial work during this transition. NCERT has continued curriculum reforms linked to the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework. New textbooks for Grades 1 to

9 have been developed, while large-scale translation into Indian languages has progressed. According to the Ministry of Edu-

cation, textbooks for Grades 1, 2, 3 and 6 have been translated into all 22 Scheduled Languages. NCERT has also developed 121 primers in Indian languages, including 93 tribal languages.
Its existing teacher-education system has remained active. During the 2026-27 academic session, the Regional Institutes of Education conducted entrance and admission processes for programmes including B.Ed., M.Ed., Integrated B.Ed.-M.Ed., Integrated M.Sc.Ed. and M.A. in Education Technology.

However, the transition also exposes a significant institutional challenge. A Parliamentary Committee reported that, as of October 2025, NCERT had 2,844 sanctioned posts against only 1,248 filled positions, leaving 1,596 vacancies. The vacancies included 145 academic, 131 school-teaching, 916 ministerial and 404 ancillary posts. For an institution seeking to expand research, postgraduate and doctoral education, manpower capacity remains a critical issue.
The other unfinished area is the new university-level academic ecosystem. NCERT has been preparing postgraduate and doctoral programmes in education and related areas, but these programmes were still under development in 2026 rather than operating as a fully established new university system.
For students and teachers, the expectations are therefore straightforward: more specialised courses, regular postgraduate and PhD opportunities, stronger faculty strength, better research facilities and tangible academic benefits from the new status.
Three years have produced a formal university status and significant progress in curriculum and educational initiatives. But
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Artificial Intelligence and Education: Reconstructing Human Capital in an Age of Great Uncertainty

Introduction

On the Verge of an Intellectual Revolution

We are living in a period of transition that historians later called the “intellectual revolution.” If the nineteenth-century industrial revolution replaced human physical strength, today artificial intelligence (AI) is “occupying” our cognitive functions. The traditional education system, which has been focused on the accumulation of information and standard algorithmic thinking for decades, is facing a fundamental crisis. When machines write code better, translate better, and analyze data better than the average statistics graduate, an existential question arises: what is left for humans and how do we prepare the next generation for a world whose contours are changing daily?

Tectonic shifts in the labor market

The labor market of the future will no longer be divided only along classical lines; a new, much more dramatic dividing line will be drawn between creative-emotional labor and automated routine. According to economic forecasts, more than 40% of existing professions will undergo radical transformation in the coming decade.

Not only low-skilled workers are at risk, but also highly paid specialists: lawyers, accountants, financial analysts, and even diagnosticians. However, it is important to realize: AI does not eliminate work as a whole; it eliminates specific, repetitive



tasks. This means that the value of human capital must be revalued. Our main asset will no longer be “knowledge” (since encyclopedic knowledge is already available to everyone at the click of a button), but “vision”, “understanding of context” and interdisciplinary solving of complex problems. Despite the technological euphoria, from a critical perspective, the mass integration of AI

into education carries serious social and psychological dangers:

1. There is a real danger of “delegating thinking.” If students hand over all analytical tasks, essays, and research to artificial intelligence, we will end up with a generation that has access to answers but does not understand the process of cognition itself. This threatens individual autonomy and the human ability to draw independent conclusions.
2. A few global technology giants

control the algorithms by which our children learn. This creates the risk that education will become uniform, devoid of cultural nuances, and ideologically controlled. The monopolization of data threatens educational sovereignty.

3. In the era of personalized AI tutors and virtual learning environments, there is a danger that school will lose its main function - socialization, a space for collec-



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tive empathy and lively debate. What are the positive possibilities: the renaissance of education. However, critical analysis should not mean technological nihilism. Artificial intelligence offers unprecedented tools for the democratization and humanization of education:

- AI can free teachers from the tedious routine of grading tests, administrative tasks and simple factual explanations. This allows the teacher to return to his true role: to be a mentor, facilitator and moral guide for the student.
- Traditional schooling is often aimed at the “average” student, which oppresses both the gifted and those who need a different pace. AI can create an individual learning trajectory that adapts to the interests and abilities of each child, making education more equitable.
- AI should not be seen as a human replacement, but as an “intelligent prosthesis” that enhances our creativity. It allows students to quickly prototype

ideas and focus on high-level conceptual thinking.

Remember: “Skills that machines cannot learn”

In order to keep people at the center of the process, the focus of education must shift to those qualities that are uniquely human. The “skill portfolio” of the future includes:

- The ability to understand your own thought process. In the future, it will not be what we know, but how quickly we can absorb new knowledge and re-evaluate old ones.
- When technology can do almost anything, it is up to humans to decide what is right and moral. This means a renaissance of civic education and philosophy.
- In conditions of information overload, the main art becomes not finding answers, but the ability to ask the right, deep and provocative questions.
- The ability to constantly experience “unlearning” and relearning in a changing environment.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we can say that artificial intelligence forces us to return to the most humanistic foundations of education. If a machine takes over logical and repetitive operations, a person will have more time and energy left for what makes him human: for philosophy, for art, for empathy, and for solving global social problems.

The school of the future should not be a building where technology is taught; it should be a space where people learn how to be more human in a technological world. Our main challenge is to ensure that AI does not become our new master, but remains a powerful tool that enhances human freedom and creative potential. This is the “second chance” of our civilization — to build a smarter, but at the same time more humane society.

The Eloquent Liar: Why AI’s Greatest Flaw Threatens How We Learn

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic concept or a tool for generating amusing images. It has rapidly become part of everyday life. Large Language Models (LLMs) are now being used to support scientific research, business communication, education, healthcare and countless other activities.

Yet, as society becomes increasingly dependent on these systems, one fundamental weakness deserves much greater attention: AI can produce convincing information that is simply not true.

This phenomenon, commonly known as an AI “hallucination”, creates a particular challenge for education. The danger is not merely that a machine can make mistakes. The deeper problem is that it can present those mistakes in fluent, confident and highly convincing language.

The Promise of AI in Education

There is little doubt that AI can be a powerful educational assistant. Students can use it to explore difficult concepts, generate ideas, improve language skills and receive explanations tailored to their level.

For a student struggling with algebra or trying to understand a historical event, an AI tool can explain the same concept in several different ways. It can also help overcome the fear of asking



basic questions. For students learning English as a second language, AI can provide immediate assistance with grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction.

AI can also help students overcome the “blank page” problem by suggesting essay structures, discussion points and possible approaches to a topic. Used appropriately, it can function like an always-available study assistant.

However, the convenience of AI comes with a fundamental limitation.

When Fluency Looks

Like Truth

AI does not understand truth in the same way a human researcher does. A language model generates responses by identifying patterns in the enormous amounts of data on which it has been trained and predicting what words are likely to come next.

As a result, an AI system may produce a grammatically perfect and extremely confident answer even when the information behind it is incorrect.

This is where the phrase “eloquent liar” becomes relevant. The problem is not necessarily intentional deception. Rather, AI can generate

false information without knowing that it is false.

It may invent a historical event, create a non-existent academic reference, misquote a famous person or provide a citation that sounds genuine but cannot be found in any reliable source. For students, this creates a serious academic challenge. A beautifully written answer can still be factually wrong.

The Hidden Cost: Losing the Habit of Thinking

There is another concern that deserves attention: overdependence on AI may reduce the amount of intellectual effort students invest



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in their own learning.

Learning is not simply about obtaining the correct answer. The struggle involved in solving a difficult mathematical problem, constructing an argument, researching a topic or rewriting an imperfect paragraph is itself part of education.

If students routinely ask AI to perform these tasks for them, they may gradually lose opportunities to develop independent reasoning, persistence and problem-solving skills.

There is also a risk to originality. If an entire class relies on the same AI tools to write essays, students may begin producing remarkably similar ideas and expressions. Their individual voices, experiences and perspectives can become less visible.

Education should not produce perfectly polished answers at the expense of independent thought.

AI Can Also Reinforce Our

Biases

Another limitation is the tendency of conversational AI to accommodate the user’s framing. If a question contains an assumption or bias, the system may sometimes respond within that framework rather than challenging it effectively.

This makes independent verification essential

Students must understand that AI is not a substitute for textbooks, academic databases, teachers, primary sources or credible journalism. It is a tool that can assist research—but it should not automatically become the final authority.

Lessons from the Real World

The problem is not limited to classrooms.

In the widely reported Mata v. Avianca case in the United States in 2023, lawyers submitted legal material containing fabricated case citations generated with the help of an AI chatbot. The incident demonstrated the consequences of trusting AI-generated information without adequate verification.

Similarly, media organisations have faced problems after using AI-generated content containing factual and numerical errors. Such incidents underline a simple lesson: fluent language does not guarantee reliable information.

Building AI Literacy in the Classroom

The answer is not to ban AI from education. Instead, schools and universities need to teach students how to use it responsibly.

A few practical principles can make a significant difference.

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Delhi University announces financial support scheme, offers fee waiver up to 100%



■ **EJ - New Delhi**

The University of Delhi (DU) has announced fee waiver for students who hail from lower and middle-income backgrounds studying across various departments, institutes, and centers of the university.

The Dean Students' Welfare (DSW) office at the University of Delhi (DU) has on Thursday announced the Financial Support Scheme (FSS) for the academic session 2026-27 on their 'X' handle.

Under the scheme, financial as-

sistance is divided into two major income brackets:

Category I (100% fee waiver): Full-time bonafide students with an annual family income up to Rs 4 lakh are eligible for a 100% fee waiver, capped at a maximum limit of Rs 15,000.

Category II (50% fee waiver): Students whose annual family income falls between Rs 4,00,001 and Rs 8 lakh will receive a 50% fee waiver, capped at a maximum of Rs 10 lakh.

To apply, candidates must be full-time bonafide UG or PG

students studying in a Department, Institute, or Centre directly under the University of Delhi.

Students enrolled in affiliated colleges, BTech programmes (excluding CIC), the Five-year Integrated Law Program, the School of Open Learning (SoL), and Non-Collegiate Women's Education Board (NCWEB) are not eligible.

Students with an Essential Repeat (ER) status in any previous examination are disqualified from applying.

Applicants must submit self-attested copies of the following documents during the application process:

1. Income Certificate for FY 2025-26 issued by a competent authority (certificates signed by a notary or in the student's name will be rejected).
2. Latest Income Tax Returns (2025-26) and PAN Cards of parents and unmarried siblings (brothers under 25 years).
3. Undertaking form available on dsw.du.ac.in.

IIT Bombay student's 'suicide' case: Parents start hunger strike in Mumbai



■ **EJ - Mumbai**

The parents of IIT Bombay student Sahil Wakode, whose death has triggered allegations of caste discrimination, began a hunger strike in Mumbai on Thursday seeking action against those they hold responsible for allegedly tormenting their son, as the institute postponed mid-semester examinations and apologised again over its earlier communication on his death.

Sahil's parents, Ravindra and

Sonali Wakode, began the protest at Azad Maidan. Ravindra said his son had repeatedly told the family about alleged caste discrimination at the institute and demanded that those responsible be arrested.

The couple also met the chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and submitted a memorandum seeking a speedy investigation.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi spoke to the parents and assured

them support in their pursuit of justice, party sources said.

Congress MP Varsha Gaikwad said Gandhi spoke to the family for nearly 17 minutes through a video call.

IIT Bombay postponed its September 26-27 mid semester examinations to October 10-11. The institute also issued an apology for its earlier statement suggesting that Sahil had died by suicide after allegedly being caught using ChatGPT during an examination.

It said the circumstances surrounding his death remained under investigation and acknowledged that it was inappropriate to characterise events preceding his death before they were established by authorities.

Sahil, 22, a second year BTech student, was found hanging in his hostel room on September 18. The Mumbai Police Crime Branch is probing the case.

Faculty member Sury anarayan Doolla, named in an FIR alleging abetment to suicide on caste-discrimination grounds, has been sent on leave to facilitate an impartial probe.

GATE 2027 deadline extended for regular applicants till Oct 5

■ **EJ News - Raipur**

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has extended the GATE 2027 registration window, which was scheduled to close on September 27, till October 5 for candidates applying without a late fee. The institute has

also revised the deadline for application submission with a late fee. Candidates who miss the regular deadline can still submit their applications with a late fee until October 12.

Candidates can visit the official website of the exam, gate2027.iitm.ac.in, in order to check spe-

cific eligibility criteria and the list of papers to apply for. Notably, this year, the registration process has been made mandatory through a verified DigiLocker account for Indian nationals. The examination will be conducted by IIT Madras in February 2027 across 30 test papers.

Education Minister Pralhad Joshi meets French counterpart, proposes IIT campus



■ **EJ - New Delhi**

Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi met France's Education Minister, Philippe Baptiste, during his three-day visit to India from September 28 to September 30. The ministers discussed expanding student and faculty mobility and new avenues to further strengthen India-France relations in education, research, and innovation.

Pralhad Joshi also discussed the proposal of establishing an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) campus in Nice, and building on the momentum of #BharatInnovates2026.

The Education Minister took to

X to share, "Engaged with H.E. Mr @PhBaptiste, Minister for Higher Education, Research and Space of France, to further strengthen the India-France partnership in education, research and innovation."

According to Ministry of Education (MoE) officials, both sides stressed the potential engagements in the field of higher education during the meeting, including fortifying institutional linkages, mobility of students, faculty and researchers, and expanding opportunities for collaborative academic programmes and exchanges. In his post, Joshi mentioned, "Discussed expand-

ing student and faculty mobility, strengthening institutional partnerships and joint research, advancing the revised Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Agreement, and taking forward collaborations through SPARC, GIAN and the Franco-Indian Campus in Life Sciences & Health.

An official stated that both countries also discussed greater cooperation in fields like life sciences, social sciences and humanities, with focus on institutional interaction, collaborative academic activities and research. "French higher educational institutions were invited to explore opening branch campuses in India including in GIFT City, Gujarat and also at places where French companies are located and require technical human resources," he added.

The discussions also included the ongoing revision of the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications (MRQ) agreement between India and France, sharing experiences and best practices in digital education and amplifying technology to broaden access to quality learning.

IIM Jammu to open satellite campus in Leh with 60-seat BBA programme this October



■ **EJ - Jammu**

The Ladakh administration and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for establishing the institute's satellite campus at Leh to expand access to quality management education for students in the Union Territory.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, officials said.

AIIMS BSc Nursing draws 1.91 lakh applications, records over 1000% jump in 5 years

■ **EJ - New Delhi**

Nearly 1.91 lakh candidates applied for the BSc (Hons) Nursing entrance examination conducted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) for the August 2026 session, while more than 1.17 lakh applications were received for BSc Allied & Healthcare Courses, according to information obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The data was sought by 30-year-old Vipul Sharma, an allied

healthcare professional working in laboratory healthcare at Lady Hardinge Medical College. According to the AIIMS RTI

response, 1,90,740 applications were received for BSc (Hons) Nursing for the August 2026 session.

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In India, 50 million children lack sanitation in schools



■ EJ - Agency

Nearly a fifth of the children with no access to sanitation services in schools are in India, the highest for any country in the world, according to the WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) report.

India has 50 million of the world's 244 million children who did not have sanitation services in schools in 2025, the report "Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools 2015-2025" noted.

The report also added that India also recorded a 14 per cent reduction in the number of schools with no sanitation service during the period assessed.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s joint monitoring programme produces internationally comparable estimates of progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and is responsible for global monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets related to WASH.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes glob-

al goals for water and sanitation and for education. Goal 4 aims to ensure "inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning" and includes targets to build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive and provide safe and effective learning environments for all.

This includes providing all schools with access to electricity, computers, the internet, adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities, and basic WASH services.

Goal 6 aims to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" and includes targets for universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all. "In 2025, despite progress, 244 million children still had no sanitation service at their school," the report said.

India accounted for 50 million of them, Nigeria 34 million, Ethiopia 26 million, the Democratic Republic of the Congo 11 million and Indonesia 8 million, the report said.

For the purposes of SDG moni-

toring, a basic drinking water service means schools have access to a functioning improved water source. A basic sanitation service means schools have improved sanitation facilities that are single-sex and usable, and a basic hygiene service means schools have handwashing facilities with soap and water available at the time of the survey.

Hygiene remains another area of concern. Around 20 million Indian children had no hygiene service at schools. However, the JMP noted that insufficient recent data meant it could not generate hygiene coverage estimates for India and the Central and Southern Asia region beyond 2024.

"India performed comparatively better on school drinking-water access. In 2025, around 12 million Indian children lacked drinking-water services at school, accounting for roughly one in every 20 children globally without such services.

"India is among 28 of 62 countries considered on track to achieve universal basic drinking-water coverage in schools by 2030. Its basic drinking-water coverage increased by more than 4 per cent annually during the period assessed," it said.

The monitoring report noted that with just five years remaining until the end of the SDG period, the world is not on track to achieve universal access to basic WASH services in schools by 2030.

"Achieving universal coverage will require a fourfold increase in the current rate of progress on basic drinking water, a fivefold increase in progress on basic sanitation, and a fourfold increase in progress on basic hygiene.

GNIOT Management Studies Institute Students Gain Global Exposure in Malaysia



■ EJ - Gr. Noida

Students of the PGDM Batch 2025-27 at GNIOT Management Studies Institute, Greater Noida, Delhi-NCR, gained valuable international exposure during a specially organised global immersion programme in Malaysia.

The programme provided students with an opportunity to experience Malaysia's business environment, academic ecosystem and cultural diversity. Through institutional visits, industry interactions and experiential learning activities, students gained insights into international business practices and emerging global opportunities.

The exposure programme was designed to broaden students' perspectives beyond the classroom and help them understand the functioning of businesses in an international environment. Visits to prominent institutions and interactions with industry professionals enabled students to

connect their academic learning with real-world business practices.

The programme also encouraged students to appreciate cultural diversity, develop cross-cultural communication skills and build confidence in interacting in a global professional environment. Students also explored Malaysia's multicultural society and observed how businesses operate across diverse cultural and economic settings. Such experiences are expected to enhance their adaptability, communication abilities and understanding of the changing requirements of the global job market.

Sudesh Kumar said that such international exposure programmes play an important role in preparing management students for the global workplace. He added that the institute remains committed to providing students with opportunities that combine academic learning, practical exposure and international experience.

Odisha spent Rs 175 crore printing school books, then found 1,741 errors

■ EJ - Bhubaneswar

The Odisha government said that 1,741 errors were found in textbooks of classes 1 to 8, and that Rs 175 crore was spent on their printing and publication.

In a written response to a question from Congress MLA Sofia Firdous, State School and Mass Education Minister Nityanand Gond said that a total of 1,075 grammatical, typological, and spelling errors, along with five factual and conceptual errors, were found across various school textbooks.

Besides, 661 suggestions were made for improving the textbooks, he said.

According to the data provided by the minister, 294 errors were found in the class 8 Science textbook, 121 in the class 7 Urdu book, 114 in the class 8 Sanskrit book, 98 in the class 6 Social Science book, and 92 in the class 7 Sanskrit book. Steps have been taken to rectify all such errors in the revised editions of the textbooks, he said.

"Specific measures, such as fact-checking by subject and lan-



guage experts, have been introduced during textbook preparation to prevent the recurrence of such errors in future textbooks. Error-free books are being printed and distributed to students," he added.

In another statement, Gond said that the Directorate of Teacher Education and State Council of Educational Research and Training (TE&SCERT) was given the responsibility to publish the textbooks and the books were printed as per the draft prepared by the council.

The Eloquent...

First, verify important information. Any AI-generated fact, quotation, statistic or academic reference should be checked against an independent and reliable source.

Second, encourage scepticism. Students should learn to ask: Where did this information come from? Can I verify it? Is there another reliable source supporting it?

Third, use AI for frameworks rather than replacing thinking. Students can use AI to brainstorm ideas, develop an outline, simplify a difficult concept or practise a language—but the central thinking, research and final judgement should remain their own.

Fourth, understand the limitations of AI detection. AI detectors are not infallible, and educational institutions should avoid treating automated detection as the sole evidence of academic misconduct. Human review and proper academic processes remain important.

Technology developers are also working on approaches such as Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), which allows AI systems to retrieve information from external sources before generating an answer. Such approaches may improve reliability, but they do not eliminate the need for human verification.

The Real Choice

AI has enormous potential to improve education. It can make explanations more accessible, support language learning, stimulate discussion and provide students with new ways to explore ideas.

But education has never been simply about receiving information.

The real purpose of education is to develop the ability to question, analyse, verify, create and think independently.

That is why the greatest danger of AI may not be that machines become more intelligent. It may be that humans become less willing to think for themselves.

AI can be an exceptional assistant—but it should never become the master of the learner's mind.

The challenge for educators is therefore not to keep AI outside the classroom. It is to ensure that students enter the AI era with something more valuable than access to information: the ability to decide whether that information deserves to be believed.

After printing and distribution, some errors in the textbooks came to notice. Taking this matter seriously, the government suspended the then director and three assistant directors and initiated disciplinary action against another six assistant directors, the minister added.

Ireland looks...

With the latest available Higher Education Authority (HEA) data recording 44,535 non-Irish-domiciled enrolments in 2024/25, up 10.2% in a year.

India was the largest source market, accounting for 20.6% of those enrolments, followed by the US at 13.8% and China at 9.9%, while almost three-quarters of the international cohort came from outside the EU.

Lawless's China visit offered a clear example of the overseas model, with China now Ireland's main TNE partner and the number of joint programs between institutions in the two countries doubling since 2014.

More than 130 joint programmes involving 16 Irish higher education institutions and 54 Chinese institutions now serve over 16,000 students in China.

"This is a great testament to the positive work being undertaken by our higher education institutions," Lawless said ahead of the trip, describing the partnerships as allowing Ireland to bring its education standards, innovation culture and academic values to China.

The minister also attended a TNE event organised by Education in Ireland and the Irish embassy in Beijing, where several Irish and Chinese higher education institutions were set to announce new partnership agreements.

The renewed emphasis on overseas delivery comes alongside Ireland's existing international student ambitions, with the government's Global Citizens 2030 strategy placing internationalisation at the heart of its education and research agenda.

"For international students, our aspiration is simple: that each one experiences a genuine Irish welcome," he said at the time, while also acknowledging accommodation as a key challenge.

The tension between international growth and domestic capacity predates those comments, with government official Ian McKenna telling The PIE in 2024 that attracting international students onto Irish campuses was "absolutely critical" while acknowledging pressures around housing and visas.

Those pressures now extend beyond accommodation, with universities warning that rising enrolments and costs are stretching a higher education system struggling to keep pace with demand.

The seven universities represented by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) enrolled more than 10,000 additional students between 2022 and 2024, a 7% increase without a corresponding rise in funding, according to the chairs.

Across the wider system, enrolments reached 278,880 in 2024/25, rising 4.9% in a year and marking the largest annual percentage increase since 2020/21.

Against that backdrop, Lawless's latest intervention points to a broader model of internationalisation in which Ireland continues to host international students while its institutions expand their reach through education delivered abroad.

The Malaysia visit thus offered PGDM students a meaningful learning experience, helping them develop a broader understanding of global business, management practices and professional opportunities. It also gave students an opportunity to learn beyond the conventional classroom environment and gain perspectives that can contribute to their future academic and professional growth.

LPU Campus...

ber of students were also allowed to return home. The incident therefore affected not only law and order but also the academic activities of the university.

The LPU incident has raised important questions about student safety, grievance redressal and crisis communication in higher education institutions. When a serious complaint or information emerges on social media, universities need to ensure that students receive timely and verified information. At the same time, allegations must not be treated or circulated as established facts before they are independently verified.

In the LPU case, the exact circumstances surrounding the original allegation and the subsequent violence will become clearer only after the police investigation is completed. On September 30, police said that suspects allegedly involved in the violence had been identified, while the investigation remains ongoing.

Career and Subject Choice Awareness: A Missing Practice in Rural Schools

Career and subject choice awareness in rural schools remains a scarce practice, yet it has an important role to play in shaping learners' educational journeys and future careers. When learners in the lower grades are not given adequate guidance on how to make informed subject choices, they may eventually struggle academically or make decisions that do not support their future aspirations. In many instances, learners choose subjects because of the influence of their peers, friends or even teachers, without fully understanding the career opportunities associated with those choices.

This does not undermine the important role that teachers play in guiding and teaching learners every day. Teachers remain central to the educational development of learners. However, they cannot be expected to carry the entire responsibility for career guidance without adequate support and structured programmes. Rural schools, particularly those in districts such as Sekhukhune, need to strengthen career guidance and subject-choice awareness as part of the school culture.

The academic challenges experienced by some rural schools should not simply be attributed to teachers' inability or unwillingness to perform their duties. Many other factors influence



learner performance, including a lack of motivation, uncertainty about the future and poor understanding of the purpose of education. Some learners struggle to see how the subjects they study are connected to their future careers. As a result, they may lose interest in learning and, in some cases, even lose the motivation to attend school regularly.

Schools should therefore develop a culture of providing career guidance from the lower grades. Career awareness can help learners understand the relationship between the subjects they choose

and the careers they may pursue in the future. Such guidance can give learners a sense of purpose and encourage them to take greater responsibility for their education.

Lack of career guidance and subject-choice awareness can undermine the value that education is intended to bring to individuals and society. When learners do not have clear goals or understand what they want to achieve at school, they may become disengaged from the learning process. This disengagement can sometimes mani-

fest itself through disciplinary problems, aggression, bullying and other forms of antisocial behaviour prevalent in our schools.

A learner who has a clear purpose is more likely to value time, education and the opportunities provided by schooling. For this reason, career guidance should not be viewed merely as an activity designed to help learners choose subjects. It should also be viewed as a tool for developing motivated, responsible and future-oriented young people.

If rural schools can consistently promote career awareness and



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learner motivation, they may contribute to reducing some of the social challenges experienced in schools. A learner who understands why education matters is more likely to develop a positive attitude towards school. Such learners are also more likely to respect their teachers and fellow learners and to participate meaningfully in the learning process.

Career guidance can also create a more positive environment for teachers. When learners are motivated and have a clear understanding of their educational goals, teachers are better positioned to exercise their professional skills and focus on teaching and learning. A motivated learner and a committed teacher can create a productive classroom environment, which can ultimately contribute to improved academic performance.

Career guidance in the lower grades has the potential to shape the future of learners and transform school culture. It should

therefore not only be introduced when learners reach Grade 10 and are required to make subject choices. Career and subject-choice awareness should begin as early as Grade 8 and Grade 9. By the time learners reach Grade 10, they should already have sufficient information about different careers, subject requirements and the possible routes available to them.

Informed subject choices can also ignite curiosity about the world around learners. When learners understand the problems facing society and begin to see themselves as future professionals capable of contributing solutions, education becomes more meaningful. They begin to understand that the knowledge and skills acquired at school can be used to address real challenges in their communities and beyond.

A well-informed learner is more likely to become a motivated learner. Rural schools should therefore move beyond simply preparing learners to pass examinations and begin preparing them to understand their purpose, discover their potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

Career and subject-choice awareness should become an intentional and sustained practice in rural schools. It is not merely about choosing subjects; it is about helping young people see a future worth working towards. When learners have a clear vision of where they want to go, education becomes more than attendance and examination results. It becomes a pathway towards hope, opportunity and transformation.

Long-term planning in an AI world



EJ - Agency

A few years ago, if someone asked me what skills a 15-year-old would need after graduation, I would feel compelled, as an educator, to give them a proper answer. Today, I see value in offering a vaguer response because five years is an eternity in technology.

As the founder and director of ACT College, Armenia's first state-licensed vocational high school for technology and the creative industries, I witness the pace of change daily. Tools we thought students needed to master no longer matter, and jobs that seemed secure begin to look different because of AI. Employers regularly reveal that they need skills that were barely on our radar just two years ago.

As educators, we know this rapid change is happening. The challenge for us is that curriculum, qualifications, institutional processes, and teacher training rarely adapt as quickly as technology.

I'm not suggesting we rewrite curriculum every semester, but I think we need to stop pretending that we are able to identify the "right" set of skills, teach them for three or four years, and expect to send students into university or the workforce fully prepared for what comes next. The world is simply changing too quickly for that.

Concerned parents ask which skills and learning will really matter after graduation. I get it, but personally, I am less concerned about a student's ability to master one particular course or tool and much more interested in how they respond when that tool changes.

At ACT College, our students begin around age 15 and choose tracks in computer science, engineering and manufacturing, or digital art. In computer science, they move from mathematics into Python, algorithms, and machine learning. The goal is not simply for them to understand what artificial intelligence is, but to understand how it works. We encourage them to build something with AI,

and when they get it wrong, we help them understand why and try again. We also have students who are already working on real-world projects while they are still in school.

This may be a different way of thinking about education for some, but it exposes students to the reality that problems rarely arrive neatly packaged, and that the answer at the back of the book may not be the only correct solution.

It's important that this conversation extends beyond the school board and administrative office because when technology changes this quickly, no one institution has all the knowledge it needs.

Technology companies have real-time visibility into changing tools, platforms, and professional expectations. Partnering with them provides insight and resources few schools have on their own. Our collaboration with Apple led to Armenia's first Apple Authorised Training Center for Education (AATCE) and brings internationally recognized training and industry standards to students without having to go abroad.

Various government agencies assess workforce and economic development needs. We are fortunate to work with forward-thinking leaders such as Narek Mkrtchyan, former Minister of Labor and Social Affairs (now Armenia's ambassador to the US), and Tatev Aslanyan, Deputy Minister of High-Tech and AI.

They have helped align our initiatives with the country's broader technology and workforce priorities, increasing our exposure and access to resources

Ireland looks overseas as minister questions international student model



EJ - Agency

James Lawless called for greater focus on delivering education overseas, warning of challenges in scaling the traditional model of

bringing large numbers of international students into the country.

Lawless said there were "challenges in the traditional model of international students coming to Ireland en masse", as he wrapped up a five-day visit to China that included trips to Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

"And while many bring great diversity and skills and knowledge to the system, there are pressures as that model scales in terms of resource consumption, student accommodation... visas can be problematic at times - all the

things that we're familiar with," said Lawless, as reported.

The minister said Ireland already lacked sufficient accommodation for its domestic higher education population and pointed to partnerships allowing Irish institutions to deliver qualifications overseas as another route to internationalisation.

His comments put renewed emphasis on transnational education (TNE) as Ireland continues to attract growing numbers of international students,

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