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International
Column



Irma Meskhoradze
Educationist
Tbilis - Georgia

I am Irma Meskhoradze, a leading English teacher from Georgia. I work in LEPL Mtskheta Municipality village Tserovani N2 public school. I teach English and am an extraordinary 6th grade tutor. I started my teaching career as soon as I graduated from Tbilisi Ilia Chavchavadze Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages. At the very first school lesson, I realized that I had chosen the right profession because interacting with children is the greatest pleasure and motivation for me. Together with them, I am involved in a lot of interesting projects, and educational programs, we jointly participate in various conferences where I mentor children and together we present presentations on the projects we have implemented. For example, the "Eco Schools Program" implemented by the organization "Protect the Cleanliness of Georgia" is enough. Also, I am a member of various national and international organizations, IIU, GEC, GFC,

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26 deaths in 2023: Why Kota coaching kills JEE, NEET aspirants

■ EJ News - Agency

Satish Kumar (name changed) from Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh, 2023 was the worst year of his life. His family is still coming to terms with the loss of their elder son, who killed himself in a hostel room in Rajasthan's Kota where he had been preparing for the medical entrance exam for the past two years. Kumar's son is among 26 coaching students who died by suicide this year in Kota, the highest-ever figure. Last year, the toll was 15.

The spate of student suicides also prompted the stakeholders to come up with desperate measures such as installing anti-hanging devices in hostel room fans and iron mesh in balconies and lobbies.

Mourning the loss of his son, Kumar has decided to bring back his younger son, who had moved to Kota earlier this year and was preparing for the engineering entrance exam JEE.

"They were living in separate hostels as they were enrolled in different coaching institutes. We planned that in 2024, my wife would move to Kota and rent a house so the three of them could live together and the children could prepare for the entrance exams in the comfort of their home. I had never imagined that my son would not be there by then..." he said.

"I wanted both my children to



study at the best colleges and become doctors and engineers but not at the cost of their lives. We decided to call our younger son back to Bulandshahr and continue with his schooling here. We are not willing to take any further risk," he added.

More than two lakh students move to Kota annually to prepare for competitive exams such as the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for engineering and the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical colleges.

Packed schedules, cut-throat competition, constant pressure to do better, the burden of parents' expectations, and homesickness are among the common struggles the students contend with in the coaching hub.

The family of Farheed Hussain from West Bengal's Birbhum district is still looking for an-

swers about what made his son take the extreme step.

"He was a very bright student, I wanted him to be a doctor but never pressured him. He used to score well in the routine tests, barring a few. I don't know why he was compelled to end his life then," said Hussain, choking on tears.

Seeking desperate measures during a desperate time, the Kota administration and stakeholders of the coaching industry sprung into action and took various steps to prevent student suicides.

The year 2024 will be reflective of how efficient these measures prove to be.

From "suicide proofing" fans in hostel rooms to the installation of nets in balconies and lobbies to prevent students from ending their lives, restrictions

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Foreign education underwent a major overhaul

■ EJ News - Manish Goel

Foreign education underwent a major overhaul in recent years due to factors such as the pandemic, high inflation in most countries, wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, and general political and economic instability. Because of the shift, many courses have become obsolete in the current times while many others were newly introduced.

Abizer Merchant, director (India and Sri Lanka) at Macquarie University highlights that courses related to health, cyber security, IT, business analytics, environmental studies, and psychology have been popular in recent times. Besides these, the demand for management and engineering continues to be good.

Lakshmi Iyer, managing director, of SI-UK India notes, "Covid-19 and global conflicts have acted as a wake-up call to many and because of this students are showing more interest in choosing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) courses. Another reason for a rising trend in pursuing STEM programs is the intersection among different fields, resulting in new and more specified disciplines."

For instance, he adds, technology is being used in areas like studying biology resulting in a specialised field called bioinformatics; data sciences which is about handling big data, cybersecurity which is about protecting online information and data or bio robotics which is about studying and creating robotic systems for biology are in great demand now.

Mr Iyer further adds that during the pandemic students liked learning online about things like

Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing, big data analytics, and digital encryption. There was a surge in enrolment for short-term courses on mental well-being, foreign languages, and art-related courses. "Even though the pandemic is done, tech courses continue to be in demand but students now like



to learn in different ways," he adds.

Talking about the changes in the mode of imparting education in the post-COVID period, Mr. Abizer says, "Many universities are now offering most of their courses on campus and in a face-to-face format which is supplemented with online material or short videos to enhance the classroom learning. However, some courses are offered in both online and offline format (or a blend of both) especially where the demand is from working professionals who are unable to travel or commit to full-time study."

On countries that have gained significance in the post-COVID period, Abizer says, "All major study destinations such as Australia, US, UK, Germany, and Canada have seen an increase in enrolments from Indian students over the past two years. On the other hand, students traveling to Russia, China, and Ukraine for medical and health programs would have seen a decline in enrolments."

AICTE issues warning to students over fake 10-day MBA crash course

■ EJ News - New Delhi

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) released a notice issuing a warning to students about fake Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes that are operating in the country. The technical body warned students to be wary of motivational speak-

ers and influencers who offer 10-day MBA courses without proper regulatory approval.

"It has come to the notice of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) that some motivational speaker/influencers are offering a 10-day MBA crash course. This is to inform to all stakeholders that such crash course is an attempt to misguide the young minds of the country," reads the notice.

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Self-monitoring in the classroom - A challenge

Development and progress at an unprecedented pace in the modern world have covered almost all directions of human activity. Technological, scientific, social or cultural advances and important practical experiences have made us witness many significant changes and innovations in various aspects of life, including the education system. An important change and discovery in the modern education system is the replacement of traditional teacher-centered approaches with student-centered learning approaches. This once again emphasizes the uniqueness of each student, their individual learning style and abilities, which significantly differ from each other.

A number of studies conducted in the field of education confirm that the teacher has the greatest influence on student achievement. The educational process led by him and the opportunities for learning and development significantly determine the trajectory of the students' future lives. In order for the teacher to be able to fully realize the potential of each of his students, it is necessary to develop daily, like the students. This, in turn, implies reflection on one's own practice, monitoring of one's activities and constructive feedback.

At the lesson the task of the teacher was divided into two parts: First is to know what do you do in class, What I did and how I did it. Authorship, training, knowledge transfer, etc.. Probably, you should constantly think that you will not become boring to your children, that I will spend 45 minutes with them. Being there should not be their only fault.

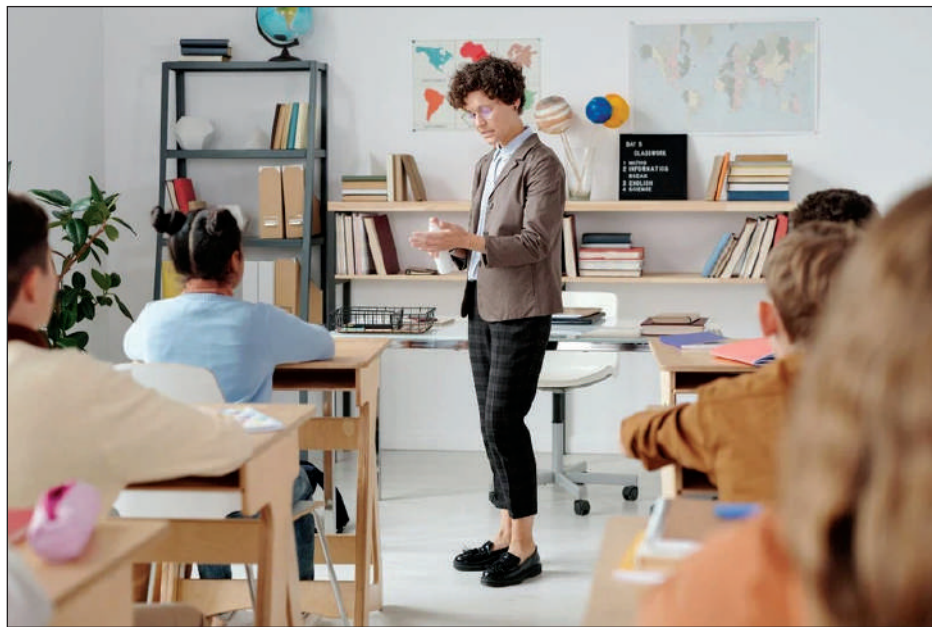
That is why I often use the very interesting method of "self-monitoring" for the development of my professional activities, for which I use various strategies and activities, for example: "keeping a diary in class", I ask students to fill

implementation is necessary.

I want to tell you that the teacher does not have a direct obligation to conduct self-monitoring. However, we all know that it is important for us to observe our own pedagogical practices while teaching. Because I believe that it is self-control that

back, that is, receiving information about the results of the students' learning activities.

There are some interesting and effective ways to use self-monitoring that I use often, and now I'm excited to share them with you.



in an evaluation questionnaire, organize focus groups, and so on.

In general, the method of self-monitoring is independent observation of the results of one's professional activity, detection of errors, inaccuracies and their correction. Self-monitoring for teachers means determining the level of productivity of their methodical work at school and self-development. It is quite a time-consuming process, but since the level of preparation of students, their success and activity depends on the professionalism and competence of the teacher. Therefore, its

allows the teacher to see how fruitful his own work was and whether he successfully used the possibilities of the pedagogical process for educational purposes.

Planning properly. When a teacher plans self-monitoring, first of all, it is necessary to properly organize and conduct it. He should take into account the details, because the teacher should remember that along with the differentiation of knowledge, he has to develop an individual approach to the evaluation of the student's knowledge in the subject he is teaching and not to miss the details. To have feedback with the student, because an important component of self-control is the control of establishing feed-

Observation of the conducted lesson.

I want to tell you that I often use the self-monitoring method - "observation" during the lessons. At this time, the teacher may focus on one child, several or the whole class. This process is not so difficult and the teacher can use it in the process of working on a specific topic. "Observation" consists of several parts, which, depending on the task and purpose of work or teaching, the teacher can use as a whole, or on any specific part. In addition, "observation" allows us to assess the skills and knowledge of children in groups and determine how well we have planned



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and GNAEB, where we attend the most important trainings, webinars, and conferences, share our experiences, and co-operate.

My students and I have received numerous certificates, and awards, which are confirmed by the achievements of students and feedback from parents.

One of the important challenges for me was when my students and I joined the "world's largest lesson", whose theme was "Global Goals for Sustainable Development", a project initiated by international education expert Ken Robinson and implemented with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund.

And finally, I would like to honestly say that I try not to stop, to be always motivated, and to deepen the skills that help me in my professional growth and development, because my life motto is: "I study to teach, I listen to help to understand better".

to teach the subject and whether the material is relevant for the majority of children. When using this method, it should be taken into account that the teacher "observes" during the summarization of one topic in order to periodically make notes and analyze

his own work.

Work with student focus groups

As you know, focus group is one of the most popular methods of qualitative research, the same as "group discussion". As a rule, 6 to 12 respondents take part in a focus group. I divide the class into 3 groups and lead the discussion plan prepared in advance. I try to check what skills and knowledge I have passed on with the students. Of course, it does not look like an interrogation or a test. I tell the students in advance that I am doing this only for myself, so that I know what I have succeeded in and what I have not been able to do. I conduct the survey at the end of the semester.

Production of a professional diary

Teachers love to make professional notes and it is necessary. Personally, at the end of the week, I usually summarize my work and the challenges I had. Also, the challenges of each student. It helps me to be constantly prepared and know where I have more work to do.

Evaluation questionnaire for parents

Parents, together with students, are the best evaluators of our work. Therefore, using their assessment is also a good choice for our self-monitoring. I use a questionnaire that I send to parents at the end of the semester. I also warn them that I just need it for self-monitoring and they should be the strictest evaluators.

Recommendations

I advise novice teachers to regularly apply the self-monitoring method because the teacher must determine how much his student has mastered knowledge, whether he is ready to perceive new knowledge or not. It is self-control that allows the teacher to see how fruitful his work was and whether he successfully used the possibilities of the pedagogical process for educational purposes.

Teacher-student relationship and the development of proper learning

Teachers and students are in a deep bond. This relationship develops only through the exchange of knowledge. This relationship between students and teachers cannot be created, this relationship develops itself. The relationship of mutual respect and love between students and teachers has been going on for thousands of years. Not just education or enlightenment, a teacher stands beside a student like a shadow. In our culture, there is a wonderful bond between teachers and students. A bond that is built only on mutual affection, love, respect, and trust.

The main duty or responsibility of a teacher is to coordinate the mind and attention of his students. If he can combine both mind and attention, one day the student will reach the pinnacle of success. If a teacher finishes reading all the books in the world, he will acquire more knowledge than he will acquire by reading those books if he reads the mind of a student. A student is a book in which a teacher can get all the knowledge. The more the teacher analyzes the students, the more knowledge he will gain.

The only goal in a teacher's life is to show his students the right path, to reach the right goal. Again, the only goal in the life of the students should be to follow the path shown by the teacher, to obey his advice because we

know that our society is completely useless without the teacher. I think, "A teacher is the Sun who brings hope and possibilities and also plants the seed of confidence in the mind of the learners."

most important in improving the quality of education. Every parent should at least one day a week ask teachers to respect students.

A teacher patiently tries to help students when parents are ready to accept their child's fate. Parents

on it, the teacher can never avoid a parent and his emotions. If the parent-teacher relationship is adversarial, it is not effective for a teacher to help students.

Parents feel very deeply about their children. On the other



Student success requires good two-way communication between family and school. The more parents and teachers share relevant information about a student with each other, the better equipped both are to help that student achieve academically. Teachers need to coordinate with parents. The role of parents is

waste a lot of precious time in accepting reality. And teachers want to solve real problems. The teacher has to proceed very calmly and with consideration for the feelings of the parents. An important point in this regard is that the sooner a child's evaluation process can be started, the sooner problems can be eliminated in his life. But no matter how much emphasis is placed

hand, teachers want to judge the whole situation with a very realistic view. But this matter is not at all in the minds of parents. Therefore, teachers must be patient in this matter even if they work based on the emotions of the parents.

Organizing seminars or workshops every year in educational institutions on teacher-student

parent relationships brings good results. Even a poor or less focused student can improve with the touch of a teacher's love, and affection. Students who give place to a teacher with respect and interest will only then have a relationship between the teacher and the student as a friend. Calling all students by name is also a great bonding technique. They are encouraged by this. If you keep an eye on the interests, preferences, and aspirations of the students, they will think that sir or madam is paying special attention to me. It creates a deep feeling between the teacher and the student. Even if the teacher is a friend, it should be remembered that the respect of the teacher should be intact like that of parents. Students should be encouraged to comment and ask questions using various strategies in class.

The teacher should be very happy and cheerful in the classroom so that the students understand that he feels very happy and cheerful when he comes in contact with the students in teaching; Looking students in the eye shows honesty and equal eye contact with students; A teacher is like a philosopher to every student.

All students should be treated equally. Emphasis should be placed on teaching students life-oriented and practical skills. Teachers, students, and parents



Sonatan Ghosh
Director of English Centre & English World International-
West Bengal - India

should work together to spread the light of education among all. Let's talk a little bit about the results. The results are always mixed with good and bad. Many times you may see that your classmate has done better than you but if you analyze well then you will see that your classmate is studying more than you even for five minutes. Talent is in everyone, just use it on time, without wasting time, if you use time properly, study properly, and study carefully, talent will come out automatically.

Everyone has talent. Maybe not everyone has the same talent but if you take advantage of the opportunity you get to study, you too will become talented. In the end, the closer the teacher and the student become, the more interested the student becomes in learning.

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GNIOT Institute of Management and Studies celebrated Convocation 2023

■ EJ - Gr. Noida

The convocation served as a platform for the graduates to reconnect with their alma mater and share their valuable experiences with current students. It also provided an opportunity for networking and mentorship, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among the GIMS alumni.

The ceremony began with the Annual Report shared by Dr. Bhupender Kumar Som, Director - GIMS, marking the accomplishments of the institution in the past many years. He shared the students' achievements in the fields of sports, and corporate and inter-school competitions. He also shared various international and national collaborations of the institute reflecting an evident growth of GIMS. Dr. Som shared the projects undertaken by the students shaping the dynamic personality of the GIMSians. Dr. Rajesh Kumar Gupta, Chairman, GNIOT Group of Institutions congratulated the graduates and expressed his delight at the success and growth of the institute. He emphasized the importance of staying connected with the institute and contributing to its continued success. Vice Chairman Gaurav Gupta Ji also commended their achievements and encouraged them to serve as am-



bassadors for the institute in their respective fields.

The Convocation at GIMS, Greater Noida exemplified the institute's commitment to nurturing a strong and supportive alumni community. It provided a platform for alumni to reconnect, share experiences, and contribute to the institute's ongoing success.

The program culminated at the address of the Chief Guest, Sri. Dhirendra Singh (MLA Jewar, GB Nagar, UP). He congratulated the founders, faculties, students, and their families for the successful graduation of another cohort of students. He advised the students to remain proud of their roots as it makes the future path easier. He guided the students with tips to help them embark on a successful professional journey. He urged

them to hone their skills, reskill themselves according to the need of the hour, and work on their weaknesses. He said that the bonds made during these years are everlasting and urged the students to cherish them.

The inaugural convocation ceremony of the students of Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM), Convocation, Convocation 2023 was successfully held with much enthusiasm and grandeur on 23rd December 2023 at GNIOT Institute of Management Studies (GIMS), Greater Noida. The function was presided over by Chief Guest Shri Dhirendra Singh (MLA, Jewar, GB Nagar). with Dr. Rajesh Kumar Gupta, Chairman and Vice President, GNIOT Group of Institutions. Gaurav Gupta, Dr. Bhupendra Kumar S.

KIET students win 10 medals and top 22 university rank holders : SIH-2023

■ EJ - Ghaziabad

The meritorious students of KIET Group of Institutions, were felicitated at the 21st Convocation Ceremony held at AKTU, Lucknow. As per the list of university rank holders released by AKTU, for the session 2022-2023, 22 students from the institute were ranked amongst the top ten at the University level. This included 14 students from B.Tech, 2 students from B.Pharm, 3 students from M.Pharm, and 1 student each from MBA, MCA, and M.Tech. To celebrate this achievement, the institute organized a felicitation ceremony on the same day in Lucknow, for all the meritorious students, wherein their proud parents were also invited. All the gold, silver, and bronze medalists received cash prizes of Rs 50,000, 40,000, and 30,000 respectively in the presence of the Institute's Director Dr. Anil Ahlawat, Joint Director Dr. Manoj Goel, and Registrar Anup Srivastava.

On the occasion, Dr. Anil Ahlawat said, "I feel extremely proud when I see my students getting recognition for their hard work and passion. Be it academics or extra-curricular activities, our students are second to none. Recently, two teams from our institute, namely, Team Debugger's KIET and Team Atomix KIET participated in the software edition of the Smart India Hackathon organized at St. Joseph's College of Engineering. Of these, Team Debugger's KIET won first prize and a winning amount of Rs. 1,00,000, while Team Atomix KIET was

contributions for subscribers of the Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 run by the retirement fund body EPFO.

Earlier this year, an online facility was made available by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) for submitting applications for Validation of Options/Joint Options for pension on higher wages. The facility was for eligible pensioners/ members in compliance with the Supreme Court order on November 4, 2022.

The facility will allow the subscribers and pensioners to contribute more on their actual basic wages, which are higher than the threshold of Rs 15,000 per month. This will enable them to get higher pensions commensurate with their actual basic wage.



amongst the top 3 teams in the Grand Finale."

Dr. Manoj Goel added, "Our college has emerged as the champion at the Smart India Hackathon, conquering 50,000+ teams and 500+ brilliant submissions. The winning team, i.e. Team Debugger's presented an app that allows one to create mesmerizing 3D representations of the real world with a

simple snapshot. On the other hand, Team Atomix presented their project, titled 'Smart and Effective Real-time Management of Street Parking,' that addressed critical urban challenges under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. This is a big achievement and therefore, I believe that our students have the power to excel in different spectrums of life."

Govt. to launch National Career Service 2.0 in 2024; prod states on labor reforms

■ EJ News - New Delhi

The government will launch the second version of the National Career Service (NCS) portal as well as persuade states to roll out labor reforms as part of efforts to further improve the ease of doing business and provide social security for the unorganized labor, particularly gig and platform workers, in 2024.

Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav said that his ministry will soon launch the "advanced version, namely NCS 2.0, to facilitate better job matching and search facility for jobseekers along with a recommendation engine for skilling by the use of latest technologies and leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning".

The NCS project was launched in July 2015 to provide various employment-related services, including career counseling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses, apprenticeships, and internships, through a digital platform.

As of November 30 this year, the NCS platform had more than 3.64 crore registered jobseekers, 19.15 lakh employers, and a listing of more than 1.92 crore vacancies. The portal registered more than 13.49 lakh active vacancies in November.

The portal is integrated with facilities of 28 state/Union Territories to develop a comprehensive pan-India network. It has also been integrated with various private portals like monster.com, Freshersworld, and HireMee to have a listing of vacancies.

It is also linked with the government's Skill India portal Udyam Portal (MSME), e-Shram, EPFO, ESIC, and DigiLocker, among others.

Regarding labor reforms, the minister said that in 2024, "as In-

dia continues to march towards being a developed economy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, I am hopeful



states will begin rolling out the labor reform introduced by the Centre".

"... so that the India of Amrit Kaal has a healthier and socially secure workforce that contributes to the country's growth and at the same time gains from it; and also so that we continue to firm up ease of business in the country," he noted.

To roll out labor reforms in the country, the Centre has formulated four Labour Codes the Code on Wages, 2019; the Industrial Relations Code, 2020; the Code on Social Security, 2020; and the Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code, 2020.

Among other objectives, these codes seek to strengthen the protection available to workers, including unorganized workers, in terms of statutory minimum wage, social security, and healthcare.

As a step towards implementation of the four codes, rules are required to be framed by the central government as well as by the state governments.

Meanwhile, this year saw a significant development concerning higher pensions on higher

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Scholarship: Piaggio "Shiksha Se Samridhhi" Program 2023-24

Description: An initiative of Piaggio Vehicles Pvt. Ltd. to support the STEM education of female students from Pune, Satara, Baramati, Nashik, Aurangabad, and Ahmednagar.

Eligibility: ♦Open to female students pursuing STEM courses.

♦Students from Pune, Satara, Baramati, Nashik, Aurangabad, and Ahmednagar can apply for the scholarship.

♦Final-year students enrolled in graduation, post-graduation and diploma will be eligible under this program.

♦Students must have scored at least 50% marks in their previous class.

♦The annual income of the family should be less than INR 4 lakh.

Note: Children of employees of Piaggio and Buddy4Study are not eligible to participate.

Prizes & Rewards: INR 15000 - INR 20,000 (based on actuals)

Application: Online applications only

Last Date to Apply: Jan. 07, 2024

Short Url: www.b4s.in/jagat/PSD5

Scholarship: Colgate Keep India Smiling Scholarship Programme

Description: An initiative of Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited to provide financial assistance and support to individuals who are deserving and meritorious but may lack the resources to pursue their dreams.

Eligibility: Indian students who are currently enrolled in any year of the BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) course in a recognised government or private institute in Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. Applicants must have scored at least 60% marks in Class 12. The annual family income of the applicants from all sources must not exceed ₹8 lakh.

Prizes & Rewards: Financial assistance of ₹75,000

Application: Online applications only

Last Date to Apply: Jan.31, 2024

Short Url: www.b4s.in/jagat/KSSI3

Scholarship: BYPL SASHAKT Scholarship 2023-24

Description: An initiative by BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) to provide financial assistance to students coming from underprivileged sections of the society to help them pursue their higher education.

Eligibility: ♦Open for Indian nationals residing in Delhi only.

♦Applicants must be studying in the final-year of the undergraduate programme (any stream) in any government institute in Delhi.

♦Must have secured more than 55% marks in their last appeared examination.

♦Annual family income of the applicant must not be more than ₹6,00,000 from all sources.

Prizes & Rewards: Up to ₹30,000

Application: Online applications only

Last Date to Apply: Jan. 07, 2024

Short Url: www.b4s.in/jagat/BYPL4



JEE Main Exam 2024: Know Pattern, Marking Scheme, Syllabus and more

■ EJ - Ravi Arya.....

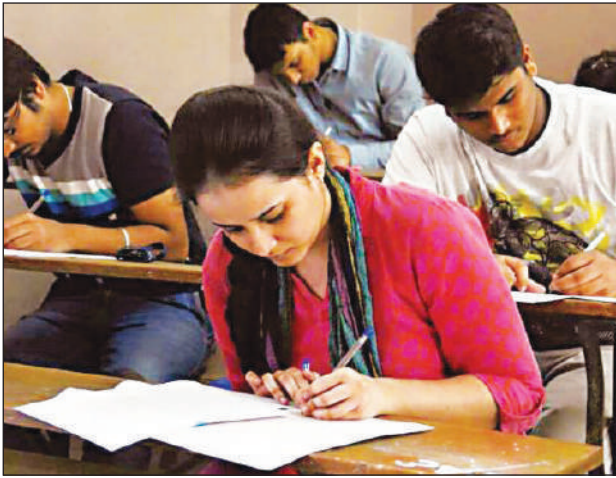
The National Testing Agency (NTA) has released the exam schedule for JEE Main 2024 recently. The examination takes place twice a year. The first session of the JEE Main exam is set to be conducted from January 24 to February 1, 2024. Interested candidates can visit the official JEE exam website at jee.main.ntaonline.in for more details. With over 10 lakh students slated to participate in JEE Main Session 1, the registration phase for this examination has concluded. Candidates must stay informed about the changes in the JEE Main exam syllabus. It is important to thoroughly review the JEE Main Exam Pattern and Marking Scheme for a comprehensive understanding.

Who can appear for the JEE Main exam?

JEE Main invites students who have cleared their 12th board exams in Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. It is an opportunity for aspiring engineers to start their academic journey in engineering.

Where will I get admission after passing the JEE exam?

Following the release of the JEE Main cutoff list, the top 2.5 lakh students are eligible to appear for the JEE Advanced



exam. Those who succeed in JEE Advanced can enroll in prestigious engineering colleges such as IITs, IIITs, and NITs. The JEE Main exam assesses knowledge from the class 11th and 12th syllabus, covering Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry.

How marks are distributed in the JEE Main exam?

The JEE Main exam is designed for a total of 300 marks. The paper encompasses 90 questions, evenly distributed with 30 in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics. Each section comprises 20 multiple-choice questions, while the remaining 10 are numerical-based. Candidates will be provided with a

three-hour timeframe to solve the questions.

Is there a negative marking in the JEE Main exam?

In the JEE Main exam, each question has four answer options, with one correct. One correct answer gets 4 marks, but an incorrect question deducts 1 mark. This deduction equals 1/4 of the marks for a correct answer.

Will marks be deducted for not answering?

No marks are deducted for leaving a question unanswered. For instance, if you correctly answer 6 questions and incorrectly answer 2, your score calculation would be $6(4) - 2(1) = 18$.

Year-end: NCERT promises to lighten curriculum and broader education

■ EJ - New Delhi.....

The introduction of revised NCERT textbooks, in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP), is set for the academic session 2024-25. Guided by the NEP's "5+3+3+4" plan, these textbooks aim to provide a contemporary and comprehensive learning experience. The significant educational transformation involves collaboration with states and territories and the development of digital formats.

Implementation of the revised textbooks:

The revised NCERT textbooks will be implemented in schools from the academic session 2024-25, as per the NEP's guidelines. The crafting of these textbooks is closely aligned with the ongoing development of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) to ensure their relevance and comprehensiveness.

NEP's "5+3+3+4" plan:

The NEP 2020 recommends a distinctive "5+3+3+4" plan, dividing students' learning journey into five years of basics, followed by three years each in the preparation and middle stages, and concluding with four years in the advanced stage.

Digital accessibility of NCERT textbooks:

All NCERT textbooks, developed under the updated NCF, will be made available in a digital format.

Development of the national curriculum framework:

The development of the new NCF involves the leadership of former ISRO Chairman K. Kasturirangan and a 12-member steering committee. The initiative includes four NCFs, addressing Early Childhood



Care and Education, School Education, Teacher Education, and Adult Education.

State involvement and curriculum frameworks:

States and Union Territories actively participate in the development process by preparing their State Curriculum Frameworks (SCFs). These frameworks integrate insights from district-level consultations, mobile app surveys, and position papers developed by State Focus Groups, aligning with the NEP 2020.

Overhaul of school education by NCERT:

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has initiated a significant overhaul of school education, focusing particularly on the Social Science syllabus for Classes 6 to 12. A 35-member committee, chaired by Michel Danino, operates under the National Syllabus and Teaching Learning Material Committee (NSTC) to develop syllabi and teaching materials aligning with the NCF and NEP goals.

Formation of oversight committees:

Following the NCF announcement, NCERT set up the National Curriculum Framework Oversight Committee (NOC) and National Syllabus and

Teaching-Learning Material Committee (NSTC) on July 21, emphasizing the structured oversight and development of educational materials.

Curricular Area Groups (CAGs) and interdisciplinary approaches:

The Curricular Area Groups (CAGs) play a vital role in formulating subject-specific syllabi and teaching-learning materials. The CAG focused on social sciences collaborates with other groups to maintain continuity across classes, foster inter-disciplinarity, and integrate cross-cutting themes within the social sciences.

Syllabus modification:

Some sections in Science and Mathematics have been excluded from NCERT textbooks, aligning with the National Education Policy 2020. Notably, the content for the Science and Mathematics subjects in Class 9 has been reduced, with three chapters removed in Science and four in Mathematics. Furthermore, three chapters each have been omitted in Physics and Chemistry for Class 11. Additionally, NCERT has introduced alterations in the curriculum for English, Hindi, and Mathematics in Classes 1 and 2.

Syllabus reduction across classes: The syllabus reduction spans classes 1 to 12, as NCERT aims to ease the academic load on students. This modification will be effective from the upcoming academic session in 2024. NCERT has commenced the distribution of revised books, starting with Classes 1 and 2, while books for several subjects in Classes 9 and 11 have also been dispatched.

Facilitating learning through offline and online courses:

To facilitate learning, NCERT now offers both offline and online courses. The syllabus reduction is part of NCERT's initiative to alleviate the study burden on students. Book distribution is currently underway, and NCERT plans to provide books for all subjects from Class 1 to 12 by the second week of February. This change is under the New Education Policy 2020, which was initiated in 2023 and is set to be fully implemented in the upcoming session.

Year-end: Have registrations of CAT, XAT, MAT, and SNAP have gone up

■ EJ - New Delhi.....

Call it the post-pandemic effect, fear of layoff, or increase in the number of online courses, registration for management entrance examinations this year has seen a record spike. Be it CAT, XAT, MAT, or even SNAP, all reputed entrance tests have seen an increase in applications.

CAT 2023, the result of which is already out, has received 3.3 lakh applications, which as per the exam convener Prof. Sanjeet Singh is the highest in the history of the Common Admission Test. Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT) 2023 (scheduled to be held in January) recorded a 20 percent increase in applications as against last year.

Similarly, Symbiosis National Aptitude Test (SNAP 2023) recorded a significant 25 percent uptick in the number of test takers compared to last year, with more than 1 lakh registrations. MAT too has seen an 18 percent increase in registration.

IIM Indore's director Himanshu Rai attributes this spike to various factors: "With an increased number of online courses and companies promoting lifelong learning, there is a heightened awareness of an MBA degree's advantages. The job market in engineering colleges has been a bit slow, which may prompt many to pursue higher studies. Colleges are looking for diversity and have taken measures to be more inclusive. This attracts many candidates."

Prof. Leena Chatterjee, Professor of Organisational Behaviour, BITSOM believes that many applicants waited for the pandemic to get over. "One of the biggest reasons for the increase in the CAT, XAT, and other entrance tests is the job market. Students who graduated during the pandemic took up jobs to support their families and many postponed their plans to pursue higher education, and now after working for a few years they feel the need to do an MBA to grow."

Moreover, with this wave of layoffs giving shivers to employees since 2021, experts believe candidates wish to upskill themselves to be in tune with the current trend.

"The increased interest in MBA during layoffs could be attributed to individuals seeking career advancement, skill diversification, and increased marketability in a competitive job market. This has been a trend across all downturns in recent years," said Jaideep Kewalramani, COO & head of employability.

Compared to 2.3 lakh freshers hired in the previous finan-



cial year, 1.55 lakh freshers are likely to be hired in the IT/Tech sector this fiscal, as per a report. "MBA degree holders generally experience favorable job prospects, with many sectors valuing their strategic and leadership skills. However, job situations can vary by industry and region. The tech sector witnessed some headwinds and therefore the intake was hampered. BFSI and retail saw a significant uptake of MBA graduates," said Kewalramani.

10-Day MBA..

According to the notice, no institution or university is permitted to offer technical courses (including MBA or management courses leading to a PG degree) without AICTE clearance or approval. An MBA is a two-year postgraduate (PG) degree programme that aims to provide individuals with advanced skills and knowledge in a variety of business and management areas. As per the AICTE notice, a management programme, including an MBA, cannot be completed in just 10 days.

Towards the end of the notice, AICTE informed that the purpose of this notification is to inform all stakeholders involved that the MBA crash course provided by these people or organisations is improper and misleading. They also urged all stakeholders involved, including students, to exercise caution and avoid falling for these kinds of fraudulent offers.

Earlier this month, the AICTE permitted "well-performing" currently operating engineering colleges to accept more students without setting a cap, so long as the standard of instruction is upheld. To prevent colleges from closing these branches, it has also allowed institutions to reduce enrollment in core engineering branches by 50 percent. This is because many seats in these courses have remained empty over time. These are a few of the significant adjustments made in the newly published approval process handbook by the council on December 6.

The AICTE published the approval process handbook for the first time in three years, from 2024-25 to 2026-27. Until recently, the handbook was released once a year. The handbook serves as a road map for all institutions seeking approval from it to run programs/courses that fall under its purview.

Among the major changes implemented by the council is the removal of the upper intake limit for courses offered by "well-performing" existing institutions. Currently, engineering colleges can have a maximum of 240 seats in a branch, whereas 360 was previously the maximum student intake across all branches.

Kota struggles...

on the glorification of toppers to directives for keeping results of routine tests confidential, roping in mess workers and tiffin service providers to flag early signs of stress if a student is not consuming food properly were among the measures taken this year to prevent further deaths. In 2017, the Kota Hostels' Association discussed installing spring coils in hostel fans.

This device works on the basis that if an object weighing more than 20 kilograms is hung from it, the spring attached to it expands, making it impossible for someone to commit suicide.

A siren also goes off simultaneously.

However, it did not gain popularity with the estimated 25,000 paying guest facilities in the city. However, in August, when the number of suicides hit a record high, the district administration issued an order mandating the installation of anti-hanging devices in hostel room fans.

The routine tests conducted by coaching institutes were also suspended by the district administration for more than two months.

Wardens and staff members of hostels in Kota are being given professional training in mess management, psychological and behavioral counseling, and other aspects of students' care to equip them to battle the rising number of suicides.

Three hostel associations in Kota -- the Chambal Hostel Association, Coral Hostel Association, and the Kota Hostels' Association -- signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Jai Minesh Tribal University in Kota to design special Hostel Management certificate courses for the wardens and the staff members.

While the Kota Police encouraged hostel wardens to participate actively in the "darwaze pe dustak (knock on the door)" campaign, the mess workers and tiffin providers were roped in to report if a student was absent from the mess repeatedly and skipped meals or anyone's tiffin is found unconsumed.

The city police set up a dedicated student cell to reach out to the competitive exam aspirants and make attempts to detect early signs of stress and depression.

Teacher-student...

But what are we seeing today? The relationship between teacher and student is no longer one of respect, love, and sincerity. Taking place there - interest, greed, and arrogance. If this continues, the relationship between teachers and students will turn into hostility; Which is not possible in any way in the progress of education and society. But are we lost in the dark?

An ideal co-existence can be created between the teachers and students of this era only if they can create a favorable environment with proper harmony between these three parties, teachers, students, and parents. The goal is only one — enlightenment. And to maintain the eternal sweetness of the teacher-student relationship with him. It is the moral duty of all to protect this great relationship through mutual respect and love.

A good teacher can make a radical difference in a student's life. So the foundation of the student-teacher relationship must be firm. A relationship built on love, respect, and respect should always remain unbreakable. Keeping the sacred relationship of student-teacher and parent intact is good for everyone in the state.



Year-end: How countries changed visa procedures for foreign candidates

■ EJ - Falak Sharma

The dynamic nature of global geopolitics enables countries to make changes to their visa procedures for foreign aspirants. The changes are usually introduced to manage immigration levels, address security issues, economic considerations, public health emergencies, or attract specific skill sets. Recently many countries such as Australia, and Canada among others have revamped their visa procedures.

Talking about the recent changes introduced by various countries, Amit Singh, CEO and founder of UniScholars says, “Very recently, Australia has implemented revisions, extending post-study work visas and raising English proficiency score requirements. From January 1, 2024, Canada plans to increase the cost-of-living financial requirement for study permit applicants. The United Kingdom has introduced stricter immigration rules, impacting visa requirements and family accommodations.”

Australia

Australia is introducing new visa rules to regulate migration and fully tap the potential of migrants.

“In Australia, starting in October this year, applicants aiming for student visas will now need to demonstrate savings of at least \$24,505. Additionally, beginning next year, the language prerequisites for international students and temporary graduate visas are set to toughen. According to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), those applying for a Temporary Graduate visa must achieve a score of 6.5 which will be an increase from the previous requirement of 6.0. Similarly, applicants seeking a student visa must now attain a score of 6.0, compared to the earlier requirement of 5.5.”

The government is planning to



introduce a new evaluation called the Genuine Student Test for all international students, replacing the current Genuine Temporary Entrant requirement, adds Mr. Ahluwalia. This acknowledges potential post-study temporary migration and extended pathways for eligible candidates. Moreover, the maximum age limit for international students qualifying for a temporary graduate work visa will be reduced from 50 to 35 years old. To tighten regulations, the government will enhance scrutiny of individuals applying for a second visa, curbing ‘visa hopping’ among those already in the country.”

Canada

Mr Hitesh Ahluwalia further explained that the changes in visa procedures for Canada aim to support students financially and ensure that learning institutions provide robust assistance, especially with housing. “In Canada, applicants must show CAN\$ 20,635 starting next year, reflecting 75% of the low-income cut-off, besides tuition and travel costs. The Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) amount was increased from CAN\$10,000 to CAN\$ 20,635. Minister Miller shared updates on temporary policies such as extending the 20-hour-per-week work limit until April 30, 2024, and allowing online study time to count for

post-graduation work permits for certain students.”

UK and New Zealand

“The UK has made alterations to postgraduate degree rules and dependent-related visa regulations,” explains Arun TK, regional director (English), Cambridge University Press and Assessment. In New Zealand, Immigration has introduced the acceptance of the IELTS One Skill Retake to simplify the visa and migration application process, showcasing a global trend of adapting visa procedures to address various concerns and streamline application processes, he adds. Impact on Indian students

The impact of new visa rules on Indian students aspiring to study abroad depends on the nature of the changes, says Gaurav Batra, founder and CEO of Infinite Group. Stricter rules may result in increased documentation requirements, longer processing times, or more stringent eligibility criteria. On the other hand, more favorable rules could streamline the application process and improve opportunities for Indian students. Economic factors, such as changes in work permit regulations, may also influence the overall experience for Indian students pursuing education abroad.

In distant Canada, a college becomes a magnet for Indian students

■ EJ- Agency

On a college campus in northern Canada, eight hours by car from Toronto, most of the students who fill the classrooms are from a country half a world away: India.

The young men and women stretching on mats in the gymnasium are more likely to be from Punjab or Gujarat, two Indian states, rather than rural Ontario. Hindi and Punjabi drowned out English in the cafeteria’s lunchtime cacophony.

In the surrounding city of Timmins, the waiters at two new Indian restaurants do not ask customers how spicy they want their dishes. A shuttered bar named Gibby’s has been reopened as a Sikh temple, or gurdwara, where students from the school, Northern College, gathered on a recent evening.

“We feel like we are in India,” said Mehardeep Singh, 20, a general arts and science major, who led a prayer. “In every class, there are only three or four local people. The rest are from India.”

Northern College traditionally drew its students from the province of Ontario’s vast, sparsely populated hinterland, a region

dominated by miners and loggers. Today, a whopping 82 percent of the public college’s students come from abroad nearly all from India.

Mehardeep Singh, 20, a Northern College student, playing the tabla during a service at the local gurdwara, or Sikh temple, in downtown Timmins.

The gurdwara, or Sikh temple, was once a bar named Gibby’s. Indian students are changing the fabric of Timmins.

How a Canadian college in a remote town most Canadians have never visited, where winters can feel subarctic became a magnet for young Indians is the story of the many forces buffeting the country.

The map locates the town of Timmins, north of Toronto, in Ontario, Canada. The map also locates Northern College in Timmins.

Public colleges and universities, hit hard by budget cuts, have grown dependent on the higher tuition international students must pay. For students from abroad, the institutions can be a conduit to permanent Canadian residence, and for Canada, the students help reduce labor shortages and increase the country’s flagging productivity.

More than 60 percent of foreign students in Ontario’s public colleges are from India a dependence that the province’s auditor general identified as a risk to the schools’ long-term survival.

Minister Justin Trudeau’s accusations in September that the Indian government was involved in the killing of a Canadian Sikh separatist near Vancouver sent tremors through Ontario’s educational institutions.

The episode has strained relations between Canada and India, which categorically denied any involvement and forced out 41 Canadian diplomats.

At Northern College — where Indians make up 96 percent of all foreign students officials said they would intensify efforts to recruit more students from Africa and Indonesia to reduce their dependence on India.

“We don’t want all our eggs in one basket,” said Audrey Penner, the college’s president, adding that if the tensions between India and Canada persisted, “our market might dry up regardless of any efforts that we take.”

Education expenditure to reach \$10 trillion by 2030

■ EJ - Abu Dhabi

Global education and training expenditure is set to reach \$10 trillion by 2030, but international educators should “expect disruption” to flows and trends.

That was the message sent to educators from HolonIQ, the global market intelligence platform for education, as the experts shared predictions for the future of the sector.

Population growth from developing markets, mostly in Asia and Africa, and an “enormous aging population” is set to fuel the staggering expenditure growth, which will reach over \$8 trillion by 2025. At the QS Reimagine Education Conference in Abu Dhabi, Patrick Brothers, HolonIQ’s co-founder and co-CEO, presented key figures, giving a view of the future landscape of the global sector. Globally, there are more than 500 million 10-14 year old children. Nigeria alone has 25 million children of this age, the data showed.

Africa is one of the only regions where this 10-14-year-old population is expected to grow over the next decade.

Meanwhile, between 2000 and 2050, the 10-14 age group is set to shrink in markets such as China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Mexico, and Russia, leading to a “very, very different world in the next 10, 20, 30 years”, said Brothers.

HolonIQ, which helps bet-



ter predict and plan for the future of education, foresees India becoming the number one source market around the world, overtaking China. Brothers predicted this lead from India could transform the way postgraduate programs are considered, as this is what Indian students are seeking out from markets across the world.

Looking back on historical figures, Brothers highlighted how international education has grown significantly.

In 1970, just under 1 million students decided each year to pursue their studies somewhere in the world outside of their own country. Today, that is the case for more than 6 million students who decide to travel to pursue studies abroad, according to HolonIQ.

By 2030, HolonIQ predicts 8.95 million enrolments from higher education students outside of their country of

citizenship, with the growth rate slowing down only slightly to reach this number.

“The US is the top study destination but when you peel back the numbers, the UK is very strong as well as Australia and Canada. But now new markets as well. China is a very popular destination to study,” said Brothers.

As pull factors such as post-graduation prospects and affordability, and push factors such as the economy of a market, continue to influence mobility, Brothers highlighted the disruption factors that could drive instability.

“Place-based pandemics and geopolitical issues are changing flows. [There are] capacity constraints in markets that have for a long time enjoyed many, many international students as well, so expect disruption up to 2030 and beyond.”

Afghan schoolgirls compelled to finish sixth grade in tear

■ EJ- Kabul

Bahara Rustam, 13, took her last class at Bibi Razia School in Kabul on December 11 knowing it was the end of her education. Under Taliban rule, she is unlikely to step foot in a classroom again.

In September 2021, a month after US and NATO troops withdrew from Afghanistan following two decades of war, the Taliban announced that girls were barred from studying beyond sixth grade.

They extended this education ban to universities in December 2022. The Taliban have defied global condemnation and warnings that the restrictions will make it almost impossible for them to gain recognition as the country’s legitimate

rulers.

Last week, UN special envoy Roza Otunbayeva expressed concern that a generation of Afghan girls is falling behind with each day that passes.

Last week, an official in the Education Ministry said Afghan girls of all ages are allowed to study in religious schools known as mad-rassas, which have traditionally been boys-only. But Otunbayeva said it was unclear if there was a standardized curriculum that allowed modern subjects. Bahara is holding onto her education and pores over textbooks at home.

“Graduating (from sixth grade) means we are going to seventh

grade,” she said. “But all of our classmates cried and we were very disappointed.” There was no graduation ceremony for the girls at Bibi Razia School. In another part of Kabul, 13-year-old Setayesh Sahibzada wonders what the future holds for her.

She is sad she can’t go to school anymore to achieve her dreams.

“I can’t stand on my own two feet,” she said. “I wanted to be a teacher. But now I can’t study, I can’t go to school.”

Analyst Muhammad Saleem Paigir warned that excluding women and girls from education will be disastrous for Afghanistan.



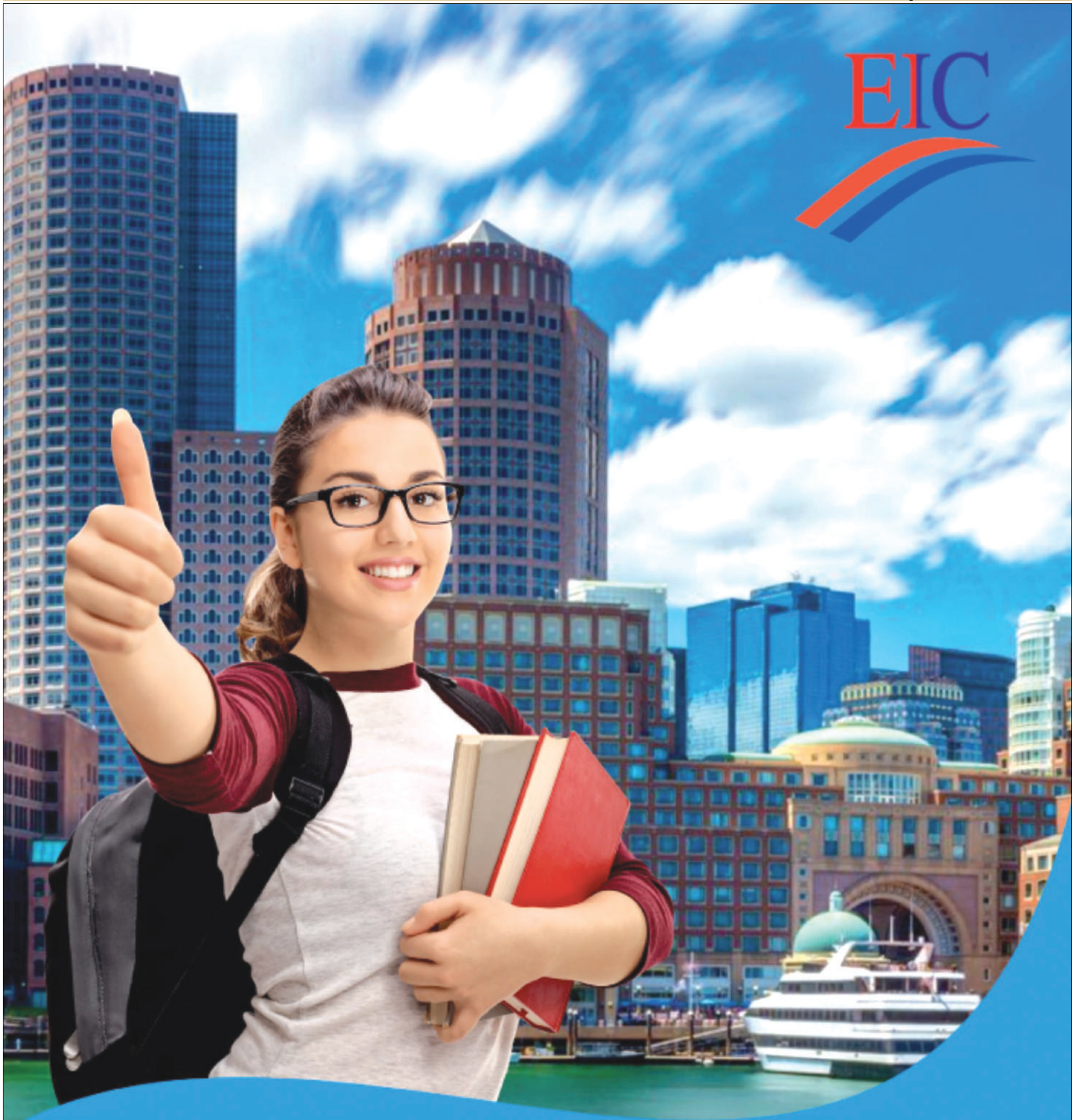
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