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## CBSE 2026 Class X & XII Exam Datesheet Out

EJ News - New Delhi

Students can now begin their exam preparations as CBSE has officially released the datesheet for the Class 10 and Class 12 board examinations. The complete schedule is available for students to check.

Additionally, CBSE has announced that starting 2026, the board will hold two Class 10 examinations each academic year, in line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

"Based on the registration data of Class IX and Class XI, CBSE, for the first time, released a tentative Date Sheet for 2026 examinations on 24.09.2025, i.e., 146 days before the start of examinations, so that stakeholders could make their preparations accordingly," CBSE said in an official notice. "As all schools have submitted their LOC and CBSE now has final data of subject combinations offered by the students, CBSE has prepared the Date Sheet for the examinations to be scheduled from 17.02.2026 onwards, i.e., 110 days prior to the start of the examinations."

## 'About 8,000 schools with zero enrolment employ 20,000 teachers'



EJ News - Agency

**D**ata from the Union Education Ministry has revealed that approximately 7,769 government schools across India, with zero student enrolment, continue to employ around 20,000 teachers, costing the exchequer ₹1,800 crore annually in salaries. The findings, part of a nationwide audit under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, highlight Uttar Pradesh with the highest number at 2,890 such schools, followed by Bihar (1,350), Madhya

Uttar Pradesh's Basic Educa-

Pradesh (980), and Odisha (750).

These schools, primarily in rural areas, have no students due to factors like low birth rates, migration, and preference for private institutions, yet remain operational with fully paid staff. The ministry noted that each school employs an average of 2-3 teachers, with salaries ranging from ₹4 lakh to ₹10 lakh annually, depending on experience and location. The issue was flagged during a review of the PM SHRI scheme, prompting the Centre to direct states to close or merge these schools to optimize resources.

Uttar Pradesh's Basic Educa-

• 7,769 government schools with no students employ 20,000 teachers, costing ₹1,800 crore yearly; UP (2,890), Bihar (1,350) lead.

• Rural migration, low birth rates drive issue; average 2-3 teachers per school paid ₹4-10 lakh annually.

• Centre pushes closures/mergers under PM SHRI review, teacher reallocations, and building repurposing by December 2025.

tion Department reported 1,297 schools with zero students in 2024-25, down from 3,104 in 2022-23 due to prior mergers, while Bihar's Education Secretary Baidyanath Yadav cited local resistance to closures as a challenge. The ministry plans to reallocate teachers to nearby functional schools and repurpose vacant buildings for community use, with a deadline for state action plans set for December 2025.

## Atal Medical University has turned into a political battleground: A project that won't be completed in eight years



EJ News - Yatendra

**T**he Atal Medical University in Mandi, which was envisioned as a hub for medical education, has now turned into a political battleground. Launched in 2017 with the goal of bringing all medical colleges under one umbrella, the project remains incomplete due to staff shortages and a lack of basic infrastructure. The recent announcement to relocate the university has further fueled the controversy, turning it into a political issue.

After the BJP came to power, no staff was appointed for two years. The university existed only on paper, while the ground reality remained stagnant. It was only in 2019, when the first Vice-Chancellor was appointed, that some activity began — but by then, valuable time had already been lost in developing the required infrastructure.

This is the story of a dream — a dream that was meant to elevate Himachal Pradesh's medical education system to new heights, but has now become entangled in politics and remains unfulfilled. Established in Nercowk, the Atal Medical University was intended to serve as the command center of the state's medical system. Yet, eight years later, it still struggles to find

its true identity.

Just before the 2017 assembly elections, the then Chief Minister, the late Virbhadra Singh, inaugurated the university, calling it a revolutionary step in the state's medical education system. The aim was to make the Nercowk Medical College its campus college and bring all medical, dental, B. Pharmacy, and paramedical colleges under one academic umbrella. However, the pace of progress halted once the government changed.

In 2020, the process of granting affiliations began, and to date, 62 colleges are affiliated with the university — including six medical, four dental, four Ayurvedic, and two paramedical.

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## NExT Exams not to be implemented immediately: NMC

EJ News - New Delhi

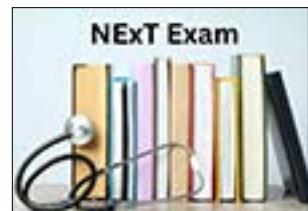
**T**he proposed National Exit Test (NExT), a standard qualifying exam for medical graduates, will not be implemented immediately, the NMC said.

The announcement came after a delegation from the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), one of the most prominent resident doctors' associations in India, met the National Medical Commission (NMC) Chairman, Dr Abhijit Sheth, on Wednesday.

"The Hon'ble Chairman informed that the NExT (National Exit Test) will not be implemented immediately. For the next 3-4 years, NMC plans to conduct mock tests, which will be fully funded by NMC, to assess feasibility and gather feedback from students and institutions. The final implementation of NExT will be considered only after evaluating the outcomes and response from these trial runs," a statement from FAIMA said.

The proposal to hold the NExT examination for all final-year MBBS graduates has been delayed due to strong opposition from medical students, various resident doctors' associations, and the Indian Medical Association (IMA).

The opposition from various stakeholders is centred on its structure, timing, and impact on



medical education.

It was scheduled to be implemented from August 2025.

The government has proposed that the new national-level exam for MBBS graduates will replace the NEET-PG and Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE), a mandatory licensure exam in India for Indian citizens and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) who have completed their primary medical degree from a foreign country.

The delegation, led by Dr Sandeep Dagar, Patron, Dr Bibhu Anand, Chief Advisor, and Dr Shailja, former vice-president, also discussed the findings of its national survey, which showed that over 40 per cent of medical students studying in India's premier medical colleges, including AIIMS, Delhi, PGI-Chandigarh, JIPMER, etc., work in a toxic environment.

The delegation urged the NMC, a statutory body in India that regulates medical education, medical professionals, institutions, and research, to establish dedicated mental health support cells,

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# The Rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education

## A turning point in Learning and Teaching

The term Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to a range of models that include systems that carry out "smart" tasks, which mimic human behavior. A branch of Artificial Intelligence called "Generative" is designed to create original content and artistic outputs in a variety of media, such as sound, images, and audio. Education, technology, communication, design, architecture, research, medicine, and art are just a few of the sectors that use Artificial Intelligence, a fast-developing tool. The growth of AI, including Generative AI, in education over time, from K-12 classrooms to university lecture halls – as well as the potentials and challenges it poses- are the main topics of this article

### AI fever grips education (2024-2025)

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a peripheral innovation – it has rapidly become a central part in the educational field, capturing a prominent role in learning and assessment, playing an integral part in the daily lives of students and teachers. The most addicted country to the use of AI globally is Australia, with Singapore, Switzerland, Ukraine, Portugal, the United Arab Emirates, Denmark, Canada, France, and New Zealand completing the top ten.

Countries across the globe are joining forces to keep up with the ever-evolving intrusion of AI, implementing new programs to enhance their courses.

With required curricula and AI literacy initiatives, the US, China, and South Korea are integrating AI extensively into their educational system. Education Daily

50 public schools in Australia are planning on integrating an AI application for students 5-12,



developed by the NSW Department of Education, aiming at fostering AI literacy NSW Government

Similarly, the Punjab government of India is implementing a comprehensive curriculum for students from 6th to 12th grade, covering subfields such as data, ethics, robotics, and coding literacy, The Times of India,

Estonia, following the same steps, plans to provide 58,000 students and 5,000 teachers with AI tools, including software, apps, and platforms, to improve writing, drawing, and data analysis projects, The Guardian.

Remarkably, public entities are not remaining passive. Recently, the Greek Government finalized an important agreement with OpenAI to implement ChatGPT Edu in high schools and foster AI innovation in educational institutions

and small enterprises, Reuters ✓ Experts sound the alarm considering the risks of this approach with respect to equity, data protection, and the likely consequences on students' critical thinking.

#### Broad use of AI in academic institutions

Meanwhile, AI is growing in universities at a rate never seen before. According to research, 86% of university and college students utilize AI tools regularly, with ChatGPT being the most popular (66%). The usage of Generative AI in assessments has grown from 53% to 88%, and AI integration has expanded from 66% in 2024 to 92% in 2025. This surge is clearly reflected in the market value. This rise indicates not only students' engagement with AI tools but also a prospering market. The AI field in education is expected to grow from around \$7.57 billion in 2025 to \$112 billion by 2034

engageli

The following diagram clearly illustrates the significant increase in

the use of generative AI. Thenceforward, in 2025, approximately 86% of students use at least one AI educational tool daily, with 66% profiting mostly from ChatGPT, demand sage

#### • The "frustration" gap

According to a report by Cengage Group (2025), 65% of university and college students report that they are more knowledgeable about the use of AI than their professors. Furthermore, 45% of students wish their instructors would implement AI tools into their courses. Clearly, professors are now required to integrate more AI tools and skills in their classes to bridge the gap and leverage AI's capabilities into learning, Cengage Group

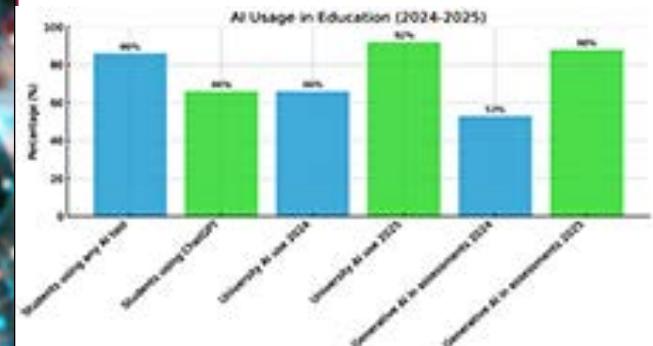
#### Pros and cons of AI in education

AI provides significant benefits in educational settings - Personalized learning and content adaptation for each student, teachers' support through task automation



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(grading - data management), and increased accessibility for students with disabilities or language barriers are some of the most significant advantages that



can be gained through AI use.

However, educators are concerned about academic integrity and risks such as intellectual decline, shallow analysis, the replacement of expedient learning with handiness, reduction of brain connectivity, poor retention, long-term learning, and critical thinking skills San Francisco Chronicle The Australian Taking into consideration that AI was regarded as a "shortcut" for cheating on assignments and exams, AI models are now more commonly used to generate ideas (51%) and gather information (53%), Campbell University In 2025, the prevalence of cheating in schools remained high, ranging from 60% to 80%. Yet, the introduction of AI has not necessarily raised the overall rate; instead, it has altered the methods in which cheating occurs. A mere 11% to 15% of students utilize AI to finish their assignments, whereas a larger number rely on

it for generating ideas or refining their work Vox Another pitfall of AI is the training programs – the majority of schools continue to be without AI training programs- 57% of educational institutions and districts still have not offered any AI training, with merely 43% offering such training in 2025, an increase from 24% in 2024, Carnegie Learning

#### What comes next? A conscientious way ahead

Unquestionably, Artificial Intelligence is playing an increasingly vital role in education; nevertheless, the focus must shift from excitement to responsible man-

## Application of Artificial Intelligence in Biotechnology and Medicine



### 19+ AI In Healthcare Examples For Effective Medical Care

can help improve the efficiency and accuracy of research and development.

Artificial intelligence (AI) helps solve many global problems and contributes to important sustainability development goals. Examples are food security, health and well-being, clean water, energy, responsible consumption and production, climate action, or protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of all ecosystems and halting

and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss. AI is often represented in the life sciences today. AI in agriculture provides a solution to food security by adapting agricultural management to a changing climate. This includes identifying resilient crops that are more resilient to environmental changes and extremes, such as periods of drought. What makes it possible to maintain yields under abiotic stresses, which influence on crop productivity. Extreme temperatures can reduce wheat yields by 6% per C. Digitization in agriculture improves the collection and recording of data on soil health status and the future application of regenerative agricultural practices. Soil attributes and functions (soil organic matter, aggregate stability, water holding capacity, microorganism activity and nutrient availability (N, P, K)) have a positive impact on the environment and crop yield. Soil management practices affect these soil functions, because soil fertility and health are the most important resources. Assessment of soil health monitoring, using AI models, is becoming increasingly important to monitor management impacts and ensure improvements in crop productivity and sustainable agricultural systems. As awareness grows about the factors that affect human health, the concept of "health" considers the human environment and the functioning of the surrounding ecosystems as a prerequisite for healthy communities, which include the provision of fresh water, clean air,

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food safety and medicine. The reservoir of genetic resources for crops and soils is provided in biodiverse ecosystems that are fundamental to nutrient diversity, which is an essential factor for health, through the availability of micronutrients. There is extensive use of traditional medicine by 60% of the world's population, and it derives from medicinal plants from wild populations

and cultivation.

AI in medicine in drug discovery and development: AI is used for identify patterns to help identify new drugs and drug targets, as well as to optimize existing therapies. AI in personalized medicine: AI is used for an individual's genomic data and other types of health data to develop personalized treatment plans that are tailored to their specific needs: using machine learning algorithms to predict an individual's response to a particular treatment and to identify potential adverse reactions. AI in disease diagnosis and prediction: AI is used to analyze data e.g. electronic health records and wearable devices, to identify patterns and correlations that may indicate the presence of a particular disease, and it helps to improve the accuracy of diagnoses and enable earlier interventions to prevent the progression of the disease. AI in Biomedical Image Analysis: AI is used for medical images, e.g. CT scan and MRI images, to identify abnormalities and diagnose diseases, using deep learning algorithms for automatic segmentation and classification of structures in medical images. The well-documented advancements in data-

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## 70% of NIOS Class 10 students failed in last 4 years



EJ - New Delhi

Under the 'NIOS Project,' an average of 70 per cent of students who took the 10th Class examination have failed in the last four years — this was revealed by the Delhi Directorate of Education (DoE) in response to a Right to Information (RTI) application filed.

The project was launched by the Delhi government to reduce the rate of students failing in the 9th and 10th grades and the number of students dropping out of school. Under this project, students who fail in the 9th and 10th grades and those who are weak in academics are registered with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and separate classes are held for them.

The Directorate informed that 8,563 children were registered in 2017, 18,344 in 2018, 18,624 in 2019, 15,061 in 2020, 11,322 in 2021, 10,598 in 2022 and 29,436 in 2023 under the project. As per the information received through

## UPSSSC releases exam calendar for 2025-26 session

EJ News - Agency

The Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UPSSSC) has issued its quarterly exam calendar for the session 2025-26. It includes exam dates for various posts such as forest guard, wildlife guard, draftsman, cartographer, stenographer,

RTI, only 3,748 students could pass the examination in 2017, 12,096 in 2018, 17,737 in 2019, 14,995 in 2020, 2,760 in 2021, 3,480 in 2022 and 7,658 in 2023. This shows that in the last four years, only 30% of NIOS students passed the exam.

For students registering under the NIOS Project, an examination fee of Rs 500 per subject has been set. If a subject includes practicals, such as painting, home science or computer science, an additional Rs 120 is required for each practical subject.

In addition, the registration fee for five subjects is Rs 500, with an additional Rs 200 per subject, and a separate Rs 230 per subject is charged for Transfer of Credit (TOC).

A teacher from a government school in Delhi, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "There are two main reasons behind children's failure. The

female health worker, and junior assistant. The exam calendar is available in PDF format on upssc.gov.in. The exam will start on November 9 for the positions of the guards.

Candidates who applied for the exam can check and download the exam calendar shared

first is no coordination." He explained that teachers associated with the project do not inform the parents of registered children whether their children are attending school or not.

Another reason, he said, is that students involved in the project do not experience the same school environment as other children, as teachers do not hold classes for academically weaker students.

Besides this, a major factor is that the principals, to improve their school's 10th-grade results, enrol students in NIOS who are weak in their studies. This separates these children from other students, the teacher pointed out. Ashok Agarwal, president of the All India Parents Association and a senior advocate at the Delhi High Court, told the agency, "Weak children from poor families come to school for regular education, but to improve their 10th grade results, government schools select these students and send them to NIOS, which offers a very substandard curriculum, unlike the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum." Agarwal said that even if children pass the exam, they will only be admitted to the Arts stream in 11th grade. He said that the NIOS project is a gamble with the future of children.

Deputy Director (DDE) of the NIOS Project at the Delhi Directorate of Education, Hari Ram Sharma, could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

## Jaipur's IIT student builds world's first speech-to-speech AI Model that can sing, whisper, and feel



EJ - Jaipur

Jaipur-based 25-year-old founder Sparsh Agrawal has unveiled one of the first speech-to-speech foundational AI models that can sing, whisper, pause, and respond with emotional intelligence — all developed without big-tech infrastructure or venture capital funding.

Launched under his startup Pixa AI, Luna AI directly processes audio to generate human-like speech instead of converting it to text and back, resulting in faster, more expressive, and emotionally aware conversations.

The system's architecture allows it to whisper, modulate tone, and even sing — creating an experience that feels more human than machine, Agarwal said.

He recently met with Union IT minister Ashwini Vaishnav and got appreciation from industry leaders for his achievement.

JEE Mains 2026 registration date and time

EJ News - New Delhi

The National Testing Agency (NTA) is expected to commence the registration process for JEE Main 2026, scheduled to begin in October 2025. Candidates interested in applying for the Joint Entrance Exam-

"Where is India's AI? Every WhatsApp group, every conference hallway, every founder call asks the same question. Today, we're sharing the answer. Meet Luna, world's first speech-to-speech foundational AI model to unify audio, music and speech,"

Agarwal posted on X after launching the model.

Benchmark results show Luna outperforming leading global systems such as OpenAI's GPT-4 TTS and ElevenLabs, with 50 per cent lower latency and greater naturalness in speech output.

"I didn't have a research lab or a USD 100 million runway,"

Agarwal said.

I borrowed GPUs, cloud credits, and even took on credit card debt to build Luna. This is proof that world-class technology can come from India — built with resourcefulness, not just resources."

Agarwal is an IIT-BHU graduate. His other teammates are Nitish Kartik, Apoorv Singh and Pratyush Kumar.

Backed by investors including Kunal Shah, Kunal Kapoor, and Nikhil Kamath, Pixa AI aims to make Luna the "voice layer" for global entertainment, wellness, and automotive ecosystems.

Early demand has already emerged from automakers, gaming platforms, and consumer AI companies.

"While most voice models are built for customer support, Luna is built for emotion," Agrawal said.

"It's not just about responding — it's about feeling."

HCL co-founder Padma Bhushan awardee Ajai Chowdhry posted on X on this achievement.

"Sparsh has created an amazing product, India's first!," Chowdhry said.

Sudarshan Kamath, a known figure in voice AI research and founder of smallest.ai, said, "Truly amazing deep tech founders building silently from India!"

"We need to back more people like Sparsh who understand how AI works and are willing to think from first principles," he said.

Agrawal, the only solo founder selected from over 15,000 applicants to the WTFund, said Luna's creation is part of his mission to make India a hub for emotionally intelligent AI innovation.

nounced the exam dates for the two JEE sessions. According to the notice, JEE Main 2026 session 1 exams are scheduled to take place from January 21 to 30, 2026. Subsequently after completion of round 1, JEE Main

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UPSSSC



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# Why are fewer students arriving in Canada this year?



■ **EJ - Agency**

Canada's international education and temporary workforce landscape is undergoing one of its sharpest declines in years. According to official data released by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the country recorded a nearly 60% decline in new international student arrivals in 2025 compared to last year.

The number of new arrivals fell by about 1.32 lakh within a year, the change reflecting the impact of sweeping reforms to student and temporary worker programs introduced since late 2023.

The steep drop is directly linked to Canada's decision to cap the intake of international students and implement tighter eligibility norms under the International Student Program. In early 2024, the federal government introduced an annual limit of 3.60 lakh study permits nationwide to "stabilise growth" and address pressures on housing and infrastructure.

In 2025, the cap was further reduced by 10%, bringing down allocations across provinces and territories. Alongside this, Ottawa made it mandatory for every acceptance letter to be verified through an official process to curb fraud and unauthorised enrolments. The government also increased financial requirements for study permit applicants — a move aimed at ensuring students are better prepared to meet living costs in Canada's high-inflation environment.

These changes, coupled with slower processing of applications submitted under earlier rules, have significantly reduced new arrivals this academic year.

As per official data, only 45,380 new international students arrived in August 2025, a sharp fall compared to pre-pandemic averages when monthly arrivals often exceeded 100,000 during peak intake seasons.

The government has emphasised that the goal is not to restrict genuine talent but to make immigration "sustainable and better aligned with labour market needs." In a statement, Immigration Minister Marc Miller said the new limits are intended to "return temporary resident levels to below 5% of Canada's population" in the coming years.

Concerns had been growing around the surge of short-term residents, particularly international students, who faced housing shortages, high rents, and limited employment opportunities. The government has said that these changes are meant to ensure better outcomes for both students and host communities.

In line with the student cap, Canada has also revised its Post-Graduation Work Permit

(PGWP) Program, which previously allowed most international graduates to work in Canada for up to three years after completing their studies.

The updated policy now restricts eligibility to programs and institutions that align with national immigration and labour goals. This means certain private college partnerships and shorter-duration programs no longer qualify, leading many prospective students to reconsider their study destinations.

These measures have not only affected new study permit issuances but have also slowed down the transition of international graduates into the labour market, indirectly reducing the overall number of temporary residents.

The decline in temporary foreign workers has mirrored the student trend. The Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) was overhauled through several announcements in September and October 2024. The government imposed a 10% cap on low-wage hires (increased to 20% only for

## JEE Mains...

2026 session 2 is slated to be held from April 1 to 10, 2026.

JEE (Main) comprises two papers. Paper 1 is held for admission to undergraduate engineering programs (BE/BTech) at NITs, IIITs, CFTIs, and other institutions recognised by participating state governments.

It also serves as a qualifying exam for JEE (Advanced), which is required for admission to IITs. Paper 2 is conducted for candidates seeking admission to BArch and BPlanning courses across India.

## UPSSSC...

and wildlife guard main examination (Advertisement No. 10-Exam/2023) is scheduled for November 9 from 10 am to 12 Noon. The UPSSSC has also noted that exam dates may be revised under special circumstances.

To be eligible for the post, candidates will have to appear for a written exam followed by a physical and mental endurance test. Selected candidates will then appear for the physical eligibility test and meet the guidelines of the minimum standards. Thereafter, selected candidates will have to undergo a medical examination.

Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) has released the provisional answer key for the Provincial Civil Services (PCS) Examination 2025 on its official website. Candidates who appeared for the preliminary exam, conducted on October 12, 2025, can check and download the answer key by visiting [upsc.nic.in](http://upsc.nic.in)

certain in-demand sectors like agriculture and food processing). Moreover, applications for low-wage positions are no longer processed in urban regions where unemployment exceeds 6%.

High-wage roles were also reclassified by raising the minimum wage thresholds, making it harder for employers to hire foreign workers unless absolutely necessary.

These reforms are designed to prioritise Canadian jobseekers while preventing wage suppression. The Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) has said it expects the number of work permits and extensions to decline steadily through 2025 as these rules take effect.

Work and study permits in numbers: How 2025 has been so far As of August 31, 2025, Canada had a total of:

—514,540 people holding only study permits

—1,489,645 holding only work

## Atal Medical...

vedic, one B. Pharmacy (Ayurvedic), and 47 nursing colleges. Although this number sounds impressive, the truth is that the proposed dental, pharmacy, and paramedical colleges at Nerchowk still exist only in files. The permanent building remains incomplete, and the facilities for research and laboratories are still inadequate.

The university was established in Nerchowk so that the local medical college could serve as its campus and students could directly engage in advanced learning and research. But today, the situation is grim — the university lacks sufficient faculty and modern facilities. Out of 53 sanctioned posts, only 22 have been filled; the rest remain vacant.

The fate of Atal Medical University has shifted with every election cycle. One government claimed it as an achievement, while the next blamed its predecessor for the delays. As a result, the university became a political wrestling ground. The BJP government had identified land at Dhangi, but it was washed away in the 2023 floods. Later, land was considered at Jodol in Sundernagar, but that too was abandoned as the area fell in a landslide-prone zone.

During the Independence Day celebrations, Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu announced the relocation of the university to Sarkaghat. This decision has sparked protests and controversy. Local MLA Inder Singh Gandhi has warned that he will self-immolate if the university is shifted. Meanwhile, former minister and Congress leader Prakash Chaudhary has accused the BJP of politicizing the issue.

permits  
—287,885 holding both study and work permits

This marks a notable reduction from 2024 levels, when the combined total of temporary residents exceeded 2.8 million. The trend indicates that the government's measures to "restore balance" in the temporary immigration stream are beginning to reflect in real-time data.

Are these reductions here to stay?

According to the 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan, Canada intends to "recalibrate" its temporary resident population while maintaining strong targets for permanent immigration. The emphasis is on creating a better transition pathway for skilled international graduates and workers rather than relying on temporary streams.

Officials have stated that it will take a few more months for the full effects of these policies to show in national statistics since pending applications are still being processed under old rules. However, the downward curve in both student and worker arrivals signals a clear policy direction: fewer temporary entrants, more sustainable growth.

The combination of caps, stricter eligibility norms, and reduced work rights for spouses has prompted some students to explore alternative destinations such as Germany, Australia.

## NExT exams...

regular counselling sessions, and structured schedules to ensure work-life balance.

Highlighting the rising mental health concerns and burnout among medics, it urged NMC to focus on promoting self-care and resilience in the medical training environment.

Sharing insights from their recent survey, which assessed the existing state of medical education and infrastructure across the country, the delegation emphasised the need to bridge disparities between government and private medical institutions and ensure uniform training standards.

They also suggested integrating research into medical education. Discussion on collaboration with ICMR to encourage research-oriented learning at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

"Proposal for research modules and mentorship programs to be integrated into the curriculum, fostering innovation among medical students," the statement said. The delegation also discussed with the NMC head on improving the quality of medical education by implementing uniform teaching standards, faculty training programs, and feedback-based evaluation systems.

They also emphasised competency-based medical education (CBME) and periodic curriculum review.

The FAIMA team members also suggested strengthening ATCOM (Attitude, Ethics, and Communication) modules by integrating modern learning tools and recommended introducing soft skills and professionalism training.

According to FAIMA Chairman, Dr Manish Jangra, the NMC chairman "appreciated FAIMA's evidence-based approach and assured that the Commission would review the recommendations for possible inclusion in upcoming policy discussions."

# CBSE Single Girl Child Scholarship application deadline extends till Nov 20

■ **EJ - New Delhi**

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has extended the application deadline for the CBSE Merit Scholarship Scheme for Single Girl Child. Single girl children who have qualified Class 10 in 2025 from schools affiliated to CBSE and are studying in Class 11 CBSE schools can apply online on the official website — [cbse.gov.in](http://cbse.gov.in). The last date to submit CBSE Single Girl Child Scholarship registration is November 20.

The CBSE has also extended the renewal portal of the CBSE Merit Scholarship Scheme for Single Girl Child for those students who were awarded in 2024.

With the CBSE merit scholarship scheme, students will be provided scholarships to the meritorious single girl students who are the only child of their parents and have qualified the CBSE Class 10 examination with 70 per cent or more marks and are continuing their school education in Class 11 and 12.

CBSE Single Girl Child Scholarship: Selection procedure

**a)** The student must have passed the Class 10 examination conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) with a minimum of 70 per cent marks or above.

**b)** For renewal of the scholarship, the student must have received

the CBSE Single Girl Child Merit Scholarship in the previous year. She should have been a student of a CBSE-affiliated school in Class 11 during the last academic session, secured 70 per cent or more marks in Class 11, and been promoted to Class 12.

**c)** The student should be pursuing her Class 11 and Class 12 studies in a CBSE-affiliated school.

**d)** The applicant must be the only girl child of her parents.

**e)** The tuition fee of the student should not exceed Rs 2,500 per month during Class 10 and Rs 3,000 per month during Class 11 and 12.

**f)** Students whose gross parental or family income does not exceed Rs 8 lakh per annum are eligible to apply for the scholarship. A self-declaration of income by the parent, made on a non-judicial notarized stamp paper, must be uploaded online.

## Biotechnology and Medicine...

driven complex machine learning techniques that arose within the wave of artificial intelligence (AI) prompted the exploration of possible AI applications in various fields and aspects of human life, habits, and society. By providing autonomous feature engineering that outperforms traditional methods that rely on manual feature engineering and achieves performance that is on par with or even greater than that of humans in some domains, deep learning models significantly reduce the need for domain-expert knowledge. To completely trust, embrace, and integrate rapidly developing AI solutions into our daily lives and practices, we need human-centric explainable AI (HC-XAI) that can provide human-understandable interpretations for their algorithmic behaviour and consequences.

This will enable us to keep control over and make constant improvements to the explainability, accountability, performance, and fairness of AI systems during their entire existence. Following this inspiration, the lately emerging trend in various and multidisciplinary research groups is based on the exploration of human-centric AI techniques and the development of contextual explanatory models. The next wave of artificial intelligence (AI) is being built on the synergy between AI and HI, which is being fuelled by these initiatives. Healthcare AI integration has revolutionary potential, but in order to fully realise this potential, major obstacles must be removed. This study emphasises the need for long-term research to fully evaluate AI efficacy over time, particularly when it comes to treating comorbid illnesses when treatment complexity rises.

To encourage responsible AI use, ethical concerns like data privacy, algorithmic bias, and accountability must be addressed immediately. Furthermore, improving healthcare workers training on AI technology and incorporating patients in the creation of AI tools are crucial stages for successful deployment. The healthcare industry may use AI to greatly enhance diagnostic capabilities and treatment outcomes by encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, creating thorough regulatory frameworks,

"These awards are a powerful symbol of the enduring bond between India and the UK, rooted in shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to excellence. India-UK Achievers is a celebration of soft power, showing how education can be a force for diplomacy, innovation, and social progress," said Sonia Kumar, Indian-origin Labour MP for Dudley in the West Midlands region of England.

# India embraces UK unis, says Southampton VP after Starmer-Modi meet



EJ - Agency

**H**e was part of a 126-member UK delegation to India led by UK Prime Minister Starmer, which included entrepreneurs, cultural leaders, and university VCs, to celebrate the landmark trade deal between the two countries.

"The presence of all nine UK universities with a Letter of Intent (LoI) or Letter of Acceptance (LoA) is a major achievement for the UK HE sector, surpassing approvals from all other countries," said Atherton, in a chat.

"UK universities have embraced the new regulations and India has embraced UK universities. All nine universities met with Prime Ministers Modi and Starmer during their joint press conference, which celebrated the campuses and highlighted their contribution to the growth and development of higher education

in India."

Though Starmer has insisted that visa routes for Indian workers and students are not part of the broader trade deal, expanding overseas offerings for students to study in India was a key aim of the trip.

Major UK universities, including Coventry, Queen's University Belfast, Surrey, Bristol, York, Aberdeen, Lancaster, and Liverpool, are set to launch campuses by 2026 across GIFT City, Mumbai, and Bengaluru. Southampton is the only functional campus so far, opening in August with 120 students in its inaugural cohort.

"India's growing demand for higher education, projected at 70 million places by 2035, presents opportunities for UK institutions, particularly as cautious immigration policies shape study abroad choices among Indian students.

Both countries are also set to deepen education ties through the Vision 2035 framework, with an annual ministerial dialogue to

review qualification recognition and promote knowledge-sharing via platforms like the UK's Education World Forum and India's National Education Policy (NEP).

The University Grants Commission (UGC), India's higher education regulator, introduced relaxed rules in 2023 for foreign universities to open branch campuses in India. While initial interest was slow, many institutions are now actively exploring opportunities, according to Atherton.

"When the NEP first talked about international campuses in India there was some debate and activism about whether international universities would apply," said Atherton.

"With nine from the UK and three from Australia and one from the US, the policy has proven its ability to engorge international universities to set up work in India."

## University of East London strikes sector-first pact for Indian student welfare

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**T**he University of East London (UEL) and National Indian Students and Alumni Union (NISAU) UK have clinched a sector-first pact to establish a new model of collaboration, geared towards the welfare, employability and success of Indian students in Britain.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed at the university's Stratford campus last week creates a strategic framework to deliver inclusive initiatives and provide practical support to students, from before their arrival from India through to post-graduation.

With data suggesting that one in every 20 Indians choosing the UK as their higher education destination has been drawn to UEL, the MoU is intended as a blueprint for best practice in international student engagement.

"Internationally mobile Indian students make a hugely positive contribution to UEL and the wider UK community," said Professor Amanda Broderick, who signed the pact as UEL Vice-Chancellor.

"Our collaboration with NISAU builds on UEL's long-standing partnerships across India — from our research and innovation collaborations to our growing alumni network and our pioneering India Industry Advisory Board — all focused on preparing stu-



dents for global success," she said. The partnership builds on the university's collaboration with some of the largest recruiters of UEL graduates — Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Cognizant, HSBC, Tech Mahindra, and Infosys — to co-design skills pathways and support graduate employability.

"Together, we will work to ensure Indian students and graduates not only achieve academically but also feel a true sense of belonging during their time in the UK," said Sanam Arora, who signed the MoU as NISAU UK Chair.

"This partnership reflects NISAU's broader mission to build a globally respected framework for student welfare and employability one that can be adopted by institutions around the world as the next phase of international education collaboration.

"Aligned with the ambitions of the India-UK Vision 2035, it strengthens the people-to-people pillar of our nations' partnership — turning

that vision into practical action that empowers students, enhances skills, and deepens collaboration across education and innovation," she said.

India-UK Vision 2035 is the refreshed strategic roadmap agreed by both governments during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UK in July, with education and skills earmarked as a key pillar of the bilateral partnership over the next decade.

The UEL pointed to some of its pioneering India-focussed research and social impact collaborations already delivering results, including Sugarcane's partnership with Chemical System Technologies which resulted in the building of a school near Delhi and creating jobs for women. UEL's ORNATE India and Naandi Foundation projects led to advancements in the healthcare sector.

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# India sees 26% surge in MBA applications as UK, Canada programs report declines amid visa uncertainty

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**D**espite concerns over global economic and political instability, applications to MBA and business master's programmes worldwide grew by seven per cent in 2025, as per the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC)'s annual Application Trends Survey. The Council conducts graduate management exams like the GMAT and NMAT. The GMAT is a global admissions test for MBA programmes, whereas the NMAT is a national-level test for MBA admissions in India. According to the application-trends data, while Asian and select European institutions saw a dramatic rise in demand, major Western destinations like Canada and the United Kingdom struggled with steep declines in applicant numbers, largely due to tightening visa rules and uncertain labour markets.

India emerged as one of the fastest-growing management education markets, recording a 26 per cent rise in international applications in 2025, according to GMAC. This surge highlights the growing confidence in Indian B-schools' global reputation, alongside their efforts to integrate technology and industry-focused learning, as per the survey. The sharp rise in applications also reflects how visa and post-study work restrictions in traditional study destinations have redirected students toward emerging Asian education hubs.

Neighbouring East and South-east Asian regions saw even higher growth, at 42 per cent, as regional institutions expanded outreach and developed globally recognised curricula. In contrast, Canada's graduate management education programmes faced one of their worst slumps, with 84 per cent of business schools reporting application declines. The United Kingdom followed closely, with two-thirds of its programmes seeing fewer applicants.

While the United States, histori-



cally the largest hub for management education, reported only a marginal one-point dip in applications, the shift of international student flows away from North America and the UK was evident. GMAC's data shows that Asia and non-UK Europe absorbed much of this redirected demand.

The overall volume of international applications globally remained largely stable; however, their destination choices changed drastically in favour of markets perceived as more accessible and future-oriented.

GMAC's 2025 data indicates that the revival of full-time, two-year MBA programmes played a crucial role in driving global application growth. Nearly all business master's degrees, except for Master of Business Analytics, recorded increases in both domestic and international applications.

Schools that aligned their offerings with emerging industry trends, such as sustainability, technology management, and digital leadership, reported particularly strong interest.

Further, as per the report, Artificial Intelligence continued its rapid integration into graduate management education. As per GMAC, only 16 per cent of programmes reported no AI integration in 2025, compared to 22 per cent the previous year. More than half of the surveyed institutions now teach AI as a core tool for business decision-making, strategic planning, and societal impact, often embedding it into hands-on

coursework and simulations. GMAC data shows that three in four programmes now offer sustainability-focused coursework, most frequently through MBA curricula. Moreover, 63 per cent of prospective students surveyed identified sustainability as an important factor in their academic decisions.

Regionally, Asian programmes, excluding India and Greater China, were the most likely to require sustainability studies as part of their core structure, while American institutions remained the least likely to do so. This reflects shifting student and institutional priorities, where environmental, social, and governance (ESG) perspectives are increasingly viewed as essential management requirements.

Globally, women continued to represent just over 40 per cent of graduate management education applicants, a proportion that has remained steady for more than a decade. However, GMAC noted subtle progress, that in 2025, the median share of women applicants increased by one percentage point, and women applied to MBA programmes at a faster rate than men.

Representation among business master's applicants also held near parity, suggesting incremental movement toward gender balance in graduate business education, a trend further supported by institutional diversity commitments and flexible programme formats.



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