



'Will divide society': SC puts new UGC regulations on hold

■ EJ - Yatender Singh.....
Agency

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, notified on January 23, 2026, till March 19, after hearing a batch of pleas challenging the Commission's controversial order.

The new Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Regulations, 2026 has refined measures to tackle caste-based discrimination in campuses by restricting grievance mechanisms for SC, ST and OBC categories.

"The 2026 UGC regulations on what amounts to caste-based discrimination shall be kept in abeyance. The 2012 Regulations will continue. The provisions are prima facie vague and capable of misuse," the top court said while staying the notification.

A two-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi passed the order, noting that the court was prepared to examine the constitutionality of the new regulations.

The apex court orally observed that if does not intervene in the matter, it "will lead to a dangerous impact" and "divide the society."

In strong remarks during the hearing, the Chief Justice questioned Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, asking whether the country was becoming regressive. "Whatever we have gained in terms of achieving a casteless society, are we now going backwards?" the court observed.

Referring to provisions in the new regulations that contemplate separate hostels for different castes, the court said, "For God's sake, don't do this. We all used to stay together. There are inter-caste marriages also."

The apex court also issued notices to the Union government, the UGC and other respondents, directing them to file their de-



■ EJ - Yatender Singh.....

tailed responses by March 19, 2026.

The Bench said it did not wish to pass a final order immediately and suggested the formation of a committee comprising eminent jurists who understand social values and societal challenges.

"How should society grow? How will people behave outside campus if we create this? These issues require careful thought," the court noted.

The petitions before the court allege that the UGC has adopted a non-inclusive definition of caste-based discrimination and excluded certain categories from institutional protection.

Several pleas challenge the regulations for excluding 'general category' students from the grievance redressal mechanism.

One petition, filed by Vineet Jindal, sought an appropriate writ or direction restraining the Union of India and the UGC from enforcing Regulation 3(c) of the 2026 Regulations in its present exclusionary form, as it denies grievance redressal and institutional protection to persons belonging to non-SC/ST/OBC categories.

Jindal further sought directions

to ensure that Equal Opportunity Centres, equity helplines, inquiry mechanisms and ombudsperson proceedings under the 2026 Regulations are made available in a non-discriminatory and caste-neutral manner, pending appropriate amendment or reconsideration of Regulation 3(c).

The UGC had notified the regulations on January 13, 2026, superseding the Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions Regulations, 2012. While the stated objective of the new regulations is to foster equity, inclusion and a discrimination-free

academic environment, the petitioners argue that the framework is constitutionally flawed.

Jindal contended that denial of access to grievance redressal mechanisms based on caste identity amounts to impermissible State discrimination and violates fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 15(1) and 21 of the Constitution of India.

A similar petition was filed on January 24 seeking a declaration that Regulation 3(c) of the 2026 Regulations is unconstitutional, discriminatory, arbitrary and violative of Articles 14, 15(1), 19(1)

The court also issued notices to the Union of India, the UGC and other respondents, directing them to file their detailed responses by March 19, 2026.

(a) and 21.

Another plea filed by Mrityunjay Tiwari, through advocate Neeraj Singh and AOR Satyam Pandey, sought directions to ensure that Equal Opportunity Centres, equity helplines, inquiry mechanisms and ombudsperson proceedings are made available in a non-discriminatory and caste-neutral manner, pending amendment or reconsideration of Regulation 3(c).

Tiwari also sought directions to read down and suitably amend Regulation 3(c) to define "caste-based discrimination" in a caste-neutral, inclusive and constitutionally compliant manner, extending protection to all persons subjected to caste-based discrimination, irrespective of caste identity.

The plea further sought a declaration that denial of grievance redressal mechanisms on the basis of caste identity violates Articles 14, 15(1) and 21 of the Constitution.



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SC orders free sanitary pads, functional toilets for all girl students in school

■ EJ News - New Delhi

Declaring the right to dignified menstrual health as part of the right to life and education under the Constitution, the Supreme Court on Friday directed all states and Union Territories to provide free oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins to girl students and functional, gender-segregated toilets for all the students.

In a landmark judgment to ensure gender justice and educational equity, a bench comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan issued a slew of directions to all states and UTs to ensure that these facilities are provided in schools irrespective of whether they are government-run, aided or private.

"A period should end a sen-

tence, not a girl's education," Justice Pardiwala opened the 126 judgment with a poignant quote from American educator, social activist and producer Melissa Berton, and said, "The issues that have unfolded before us echo the very same judicial disquiet. Even with the passage of time, the challenges that beset a girl child's education persist in much the same form." The verdict warns of stringent consequences for non-compliance, including the derecognition of private schools and holding state governments directly accountable for failures in public institutions.

"The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health. Access to safe, effective and afford-



able menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health," the bench held.

ecosystem romanticise foreign invaders and glorify anti-Hindu tyrants. BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said Ansari's affection for foreign invaders and plunderers reflects his "sick mindset".

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Empowering the Next Generation: From Digital Diaries to Global Leadership

In the heart of the Dedoplistskaro municipality, a remote yet culturally rich region of Eastern Georgia, a profound transformation is taking place. As an educator who has spent 26 years in the classroom, I have always believed that teaching is not merely the transmission of facts, but the ignition of human potential. This conviction, nurtured over decades of pedagogical practice, led to the birth of “Girls’ Hub – Digital Diaries of Dedoplistskaro Girls,” an initiative designed to bridge the gap between rural limitations and global opportunities.

A Personal Mission: Radical Inclusivity and Selfless Hosting

When I first conceptualized the “Girls’ Hub,” my primary goal was to create a sanctuary of radical inclusivity. I wanted to build a space where social status, ethnic background, or physical challenges would never dictate a child’s future. In a world where educational opportunities are often hidden behind financial walls, I made a conscious and firm decision: I would host this entire program through my own personal resources.

By offering the program completely free of charge, I ensured that no talented young woman was left behind due to her family’s economic situation. Among our 15 participants were girls from large families, socially vulnerable backgrounds, and diverse ethnic groups. My home and learning center were transformed into a vibrant laboratory of dreams. Here, we didn’t just teach lessons; we shared meals, ideas, and a common vision for a better future. This personal investment was my way of demonstrating that true mentorship requires more than professional duty—it requires a heart-led commitment to one’s community.

Breaking the Silence: Nini’s Extraordinary Journey



Within the Hub, one story stands out as a beacon of our mission’s success. Nini, a young girl with disabilities (PWD), joined us at a time when her world felt restricted by societal barriers and physical limitations. In many rural settings, students like Nini are often overlooked or relegated to the sidelines of extracurricular activities.

Initially, Nini was reserved; her voice was barely a whisper in our group discussions. However, our program was built on the principle that disability is not a lack of ability, but a different way of experiencing the world. Through the dedicated facilitation of our volunteer teachers and a student-centered curriculum, we provided Nini with the digital tools she needed to speak her truth.

The program’s impact was further strengthened by the invaluable support of a special education teacher from my school, whose expertise ensured that every activity was perfectly adapted to meet the

unique needs of all our participants.

The transformation was miraculous. By the end of the two weeks, Nini had produced a stunning digital diary. Using mobile photography and carefully crafted narratives, she communicated a perspective that had long been silenced. Watching her present her work to her peers was a moment of profound realization for everyone involved: inclusion is not a favor we do for others; it is a necessity for a complete society. Nini is no longer just a spectator; she is a creator and an inspiration to every girl in our municipality.

Digital Literacy: Shaping the Narrative of the Future

The “Digital Diaries” were the cornerstone of our academic approach. We focused on storytelling, mobile photography, and podcasting—skills that are essential in the 21st-century global economy. With the guidance of passionate volunteers, the girls moved from being passive observers to active storytellers. They learned to draft scripts that reflected their reality, record podcasts that questioned social norms, and edit videos that showcased the hidden beauty of their hometown.

However, the technology was merely the medium. The true curriculum was the development of Critical Thinking and Emotional Intelligence. We were joined by esteemed colleagues from Tbilisi and Telavi, who conducted workshops such as “Knowledge as a Tool for Change” and “The Teacher: A Bridge to a Better Future.” These sessions challenged the girls to think beyond their immediate surroundings and to view themselves as global citizens with the power to initiate change.

Cultural Diplomacy: The Embassy of India and Global Perspectives

Our journey reached a pinnacle when we were invited by the Embassy of India to Armenia and Georgia to celebrate India’s Independence Day. This was a masterclass in cultural diplomacy and multicultural awareness. For many of these girls, it was their first time interacting with international diplomats and experiencing a culture so vastly different from their own.

I watched with immense pride as our girls performed tradi-

progress, and your talent is valued.”

A New Horizon: The Tourism Club and the Japanese Spirit

The momentum of the “Girls’ Hub” was too powerful to end after two weeks. The participants themselves demanded a way to keep the fire burning. This led to the creation of the *School-Based Tourism Club*, which I now curate alongside a dedicated Japanese volunteer.

The fusion of Georgian hospitality with the Japanese philosophy of precision and work ethic has created a unique educational ecosystem. Today, these girls are applying the digital skills they learned—photography, social media strategy, and storytelling—to promote the tourism potential of Dedoplistskaro. They are planning hiking routes, creating promotional content for historical sites, and preparing to host international guests. They have transitioned from learning about digital diaries to actively writing the economic and cultural future of their region.

Conclusion: A Vision for Educators Everywhere

The “Girls’ Hub” was never just about teaching software or dance moves; it was about reclaiming self-worth. It was about ensuring that every girl, regardless of her physical abilities or economic status, knows that she has a seat at the table.

To my fellow educators around the world: *Do not wait for the perfect grant or the ideal conditions to begin your work.* The most transformative projects often start in the living rooms of teachers who are willing to invest their own resources and hearts. When we provide rural youth with digital tools, global perspectives, and a supportive community, we are not just changing their lives—we are strengthening the very fabric of our global society.

From the quiet streets of Dedoplistskaro to the vibrant halls of international embassies, our story continues. We have moved from digital diaries to real-world impact, and for these girls, this is only the beginning of their journey as leaders, creators, and change-makers.



Eka Sepiashvili
English Language Mentor
Dedoplistskaro - Georgia

tional Georgian national dances, draped in the elegance of our heritage, before an international audience. One of our volunteers, Barbare Chitishvili, stepped into the demanding role of an interpreter, bridging the gap between Georgian, English, and the diverse guests at the embassy. This experience, supported by the recurring kindness of Mr. Darispan Prasher, proved to the girls that their local identity is a vital asset in the global dialogue. They learned that being from a small town in Georgia does not limit them; rather, it gives them a unique story to tell the world.

The Synergy of Support: Corporate Social Responsibility

While the program was hosted through my personal resources, I recognized that to truly honor the girls’ hard work, we needed the support of the wider community and the business sector. I spent weeks advocating for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), reaching out to companies to show them the impact of our work.

The response was overwhelming. I am deeply grateful to *PARIS, Lutecia, Palitra L Publishing, Milky City, Gurjaani Ice Cream, TI’ME, PSP Pharmacy, and Badagi*. Their contributions allowed us to provide the girls with high-quality gifts and rewards. These were not just prizes; they were symbols of professional recognition. They sent a clear message to our students: *“The world is watching your*

Skill Development for the Future: How Indian Undergraduates Will Navigate the Job Market in 2026

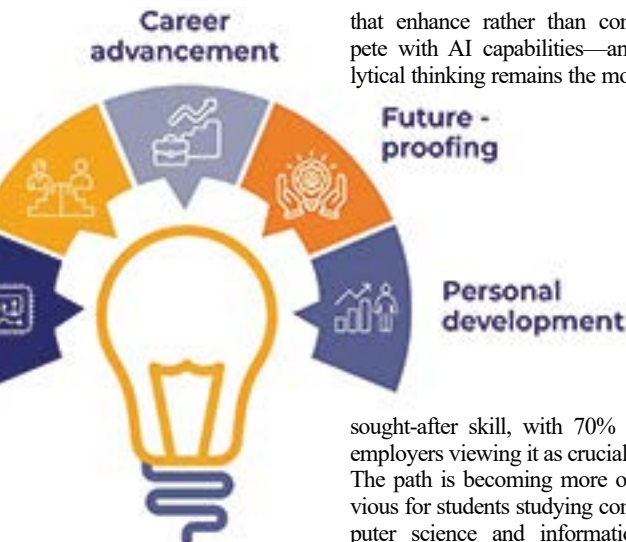
Undergraduate students must strategically upskill in order to stay competitive in a labor market that is becoming more difficult due to technological disruption. The Class of 2025 has entered one of the most constrained entry-level labor markets in recent years. While the India Skills Report 2025 projects, 55% of graduates will be globally employable, Mercer-Mettl’s analysis shows actual employability has declined to 42.6% in 2024. More concerning, graduate unemployment stands at 13%, with over a third of graduates in their early twenties remaining unemployed. This sobering reality underscores an urgent need for strategic skill development during the undergraduate years.

India’s job market presents a paradox: despite producing over 10 million graduates annually, the country is projected to add 12.8 million new jobs in 2026.

The challenge lies not in job availability but in the critical skills gap between what graduates possess and what employers demand.

The AI Imperative

According to McKinsey research, the demand for AI fluency will nearly sevenfold through mid-2025, changing employment across all sectors. India ranks first globally in AI skill penetration yet faces a projected shortfall of 1.4 million AI professionals by 2026—highlighting both the



opportunity and urgency for current undergraduates.

But the AI revolution requires more than just technical expertise. After resilience, flexibility, agility, and creative thinking—qualities

that enhance rather than compete with AI capabilities—analytical thinking remains the most

sought-after skill, with 70% of employers viewing it as crucial. The path is becoming more obvious for students studying computer science and information technology. Proficiency in cybersecurity (networks and data protection), cloud computing (with AWS and Azure platforms driving 20.4% sector growth), AI and machine learning (including generative AI and natural language



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processing), data analytics (big data processing and statistical modeling), and Python programming (required in 18% of job listings in 2025) is crucial.

Beyond Technical Fields

Business education experts emphasize that BBA Business Analytics represents a significant opportunity, with analysts in high demand across diverse sectors including healthcare, telecom-

munications, and e-commerce. This growing demand reflects the industry’s recognition that data-driven decision-making has become essential to competitive advantage. The career landscape for business analytics graduates has expanded considerably, offering diverse pathways such as business analyst, data analyst, market research analyst, digital marketing analyst, financial analyst, and risk analyst roles. What makes these professionals stand out in today’s job market is their ability to connect two important skills—strong technical knowledge combined with solid business understanding. This powerful combination makes them highly valuable to companies across all industries, giving business analytics graduates excellent career opportunities in our data-driven world.

Similarly, pharmacy students can stand out by learning skills like scientific data analysis, digital health platforms, and process automation—abilities that healthcare companies now highly value. Mechanical engineering students should focus

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CBSE Admit Cards 2026: Class Xth, XIIth hall tickets likely in February first week



■ EJ - New Delhi

The Central Board of Secondary Education is expected to release the admit cards for the Class 10 and Class 12 main examinations 2026 in the first week of February. Once issued, eligible students will be able to download their hall tickets from the official website cbse.gov.in and will be required to carry them to the examination centre on all exam days. In several schools, the CBSE Class 10 and 12 admit cards are distributed directly by the school heads. Last year, the Board released the hall tickets on February 3, and students can expect the admit cards to be issued around a similar timeline this year as well. The Board has already released the admit cards for private candidates.

The CBSE 10th and 12th admit cards will contain important details such as the candidate's name, roll number, exam dates, exam centre address, shift timings and other exam-related instructions.

Meanwhile, CBSE has recently revised the examination schedule for Classes 10 and 12. The Board had earlier postponed the exams scheduled for March 3, 2026, citing administrative reasons. As stated by CBSE, "the examinations of the subjects for Class 10 and Class 12, which were earlier scheduled on 03 March 2026, have been rescheduled due to administrative reasons."

As per the revised schedule, the CBSE Class 10 examination

How To Download CBSE Class 10, 12 Admit Card 2026?

Students can download their hall tickets by following these steps:

- Visit the official website cbse.gov.in.
- Click on the CBSE Class 10 and 12 admit card 2026 PDF link.
- Enter the application number and date of birth as login credentials.
- The CBSE Class 10 and 12 admit card 2026 will appear on the screen.
- Download the PDF and take a printout for future use.

will now be held on March 11, 2026, while the rescheduled date for the Class 12 examination is April 10, 2026.

Students are advised to regularly check the official CBSE website for the latest updates related to the Class 10 and 12 board examinations 2026.

Gains on paper, big gaps on the ground



■ EJ - New Delhi

The government on January 23, 2026 to mark National Girl Child Day claimed steady progress in girls' education, health and empowerment, citing higher school enrolment, improved sex ratios at birth and rising female participation in STEM. But crime records, labour data and state-level demographic evidence point to a contradicting picture.

The government document quotes UDISH (Unified District Information System for Education) reports that girls' gross enrolment ratio at the secondary level has reached 80.2% in 2024-25 and that women now constitute 43% of STEM enrolments, among the highest globally. It also notes an improvement in the national sex ratio at birth from about 918 in 2014-15 to 930 in 2023-24.

However, data released by the National Crime Records Bu-

reau complicates this narrative. NCRB figures for 2023 show 4.48 lakh crimes against women, translating to a rate of 66.2 cases per 1 lakh women, with Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh reporting the highest absolute numbers. Domestic cruelty by husbands or relatives accounts for the largest share, while abduction, sexual assault and cybercrime continue to rise.

Demographic data at the state and district level also reveals uneven progress. Independent demographic research shows that MP alone accounted for an estimated 2.8 lakh "missing girls" in the mid-2000s, largely due to abortions and higher female child mortality.

According to MP government, only 12 of its 50 districts meet the benchmark sex ratio at birth of 952 girls per 1,000 boys, with districts like Harda recording ratios as low as 894.

In Haryana, where Beti Bachao Beti Padhao was launched, the sex ratio at birth fell from 923 in 2019 to 910 by 2024, pointing to continued sex selection despite campaigns, (Data from Civil Registration System (CRS) up to December 2024)

Education data masks exclusions. While enrolment has risen, independent reporting across Jharkhand, MP and Rajasthan shows girls dropping out due to poverty, domestic labour, and early marriage and safety concerns. The government reviews admit retention challenges but does not quantify dropout rates post-secondary, particularly among Dalit, Adivasi and Muslim girls.

Labour outcomes are even starker. According to International Labour Organization estimates and Periodic Labour Force Survey trends, India's female labour force participation is among the lowest globally, with most working women concentrated in informal, unpaid or precarious work, limiting the translation of educational gains into economic independence.

Reports of missing women and girls further complicate the empowerment narrative. In Odisha alone, over 44,000 women and girls have reportedly been missing, with NCRB data indicating that many missing cases overlap with trafficking and forced marriage.

Google commits Rs 85 crore to power AI push across India's public education platforms



■ EJ - Agency

Global tech giant Google on Wednesday announced a grant of Rs 85 crore, or nearly \$10 million, to non-profit organisation Wadhvani AI to support the integration of artificial intelligence into government-owned education and skilling platforms, in a move aimed at expanding access to digital learning tools at scale across India.

The initiative is designed to help build and deploy AI-powered solutions that can be embedded into public education and development

systems, enabling more personalised, accessible and effective learning experiences. According to the company, the programme seeks to reach around 75 million students, 1.8 million educators and one million early-career professionals by the end of 2027.

Google said the grant will be used to strengthen Wadhvani AI's work in developing open-source, population-scale AI applications tailored to India's public infrastructure, with a focus on improving teaching

support, student engagement and workforce readiness. The partnership will also emphasise responsible and inclusive AI development, ensuring that tools are designed to be equitable, transparent and aligned with local needs.

Wadhvani AI said the funding will accelerate its efforts to collaborate with government bodies and educational institutions to integrate advanced technologies into large national platforms, helping to bridge gaps in learning outcomes and employability. The organisation added that the initiative will prioritise multilingual capabilities and low-bandwidth deployment to ensure wider reach, particularly in underserved regions.

The announcement comes as technology companies step up investments in using artificial intelligence to address large-scale social challenges, including education and skills development, and reflects growing interest in public-private partnerships to modernise India's digital public infrastructure.

IP University releases admission brochure for 2026-27 session; 24 new courses introduced

■ EJ - New Delhi

Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU) or IP University (IPU) on January 28 started the online admission process for the academic session 2026-27 with the release of its admission brochures for undergraduate (UG), postgraduate (PG), and PhD programmes.

With over 43,000 seats available

across more than 130 affiliated colleges and university schools, the university is offering admissions to UG, PG, and doctoral programmes. The online application process will start on February 2, 2026.

For the 2026-27 academic session, the university has introduced 24 new courses. These include Bachelor of Management

Studies (BMS), Lateral Entry in B.S. (Packaging Technology), MTech in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence, MA Mass Communication (Weekend Programme), additional weekend programmes in select disciplines, Bachelor of Physiotherapy, BTech in Industrial Chemistry, BSc Clinical Psychology, BTech in Computer

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How Skill-Based Education Shapes Students' Futures

Across the world, education systems are shifting their focus from memorization to skills. Skill-based education is no longer a trend; it is a necessity. For students, especially those in rural and regional schools, skills determine not only academic success but future career opportunities.

As an English language teacher working in a rural school in Georgia, I have seen how skill education can transform students' attitudes toward learning. When lessons are connected to real-life skills, learners become more motivated, confident, and

When students are involved in skill-oriented activities, their role changes significantly. They move from passive listening to active participation. They research topics, solve problems, work in teams, and present ideas. These experiences prepare them for real academic and professional environments.

The impact of skill education is clearly visible. Students who once lacked confidence begin to speak more freely and express their ideas clearly. They learn how to manage tasks, work with others, and communicate effec-



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responsible for their own progress.

Skill-based education goes far beyond subject knowledge. It develops communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy. In my classroom, English becomes a practical tool for building these skills through discussions, presentations, teamwork, and project-based learning.

tively. Many start to think seriously about future careers, international education, and lifelong learning.

Teachers play a key role in implementing skill-based education. Our responsibility is to create learning environments where skills are practiced naturally and meaningfully. This does not always require advanced technology. Even simple, well-designed

classroom activities can develop essential life skills.

In a rapidly changing world, education must prepare students not only to pass exams, but to adapt, communicate, and succeed in real life. Skill-based education builds this foundation. When students develop skills alongside knowledge, they gain confidence, independence, and a clear vision of their future.

Over 300 civil servants in public service studied at IIT Delhi

EJ - New Delhi

Over 650 IIT Delhi alumni currently serve in public institutions, reveals the Alumni Impact Report 2026 from the Institute. Completing 65 years of its foundation, IIT Delhi highlighted that its graduates are shaping governance in India with more than 270 IAS officers and 100 officers across the IPS, IRS, and IFS. The institute has also produced 250 leaders in PSUs, regulatory bodies, and scientific missions, while its Naval Construction Wing has trained over 700 officers for the Indian Navy.

Globally, IIT Delhi's academic rigour is reflected in over 50 alumni teaching at QS Top 100 universities and more than 300 serving as faculty across IITs, mentions the report. The Alumni Impact Report was released by chief guest Dr Gurtej S Sandhu, an IIT Delhi alum and Principal Fellow and Corporate Vice President at Micron Technology, and Prof Rangan Banerjee, Director of IIT Delhi, during a foundation day function organised by the Institute.

The institute's latest report reveals that more than 2,500 founders and co-founders have sprung from its corridors, collectively shaping the global 'Unicorn ecosystem and generating 4.8 lakh direct jobs.

IIT Delhi alumni have been at the forefront of building some of the most "iconic brands" in the digital economy, as per the report. Among them are Deepinder Goyal, founder of Eternal, which houses Zomato and

Blinkit; Harsh Jain, co-founder of Groww, a fintech trailblazer; and Vidit Aatrey and Sanjeev Barnwal behind Meesho.

The Bansal duo, Sachin and Binny, have introduced Flipkart, while Ashutosh Garg (Eightfold.ai, Bloomreach), Jyoti Bansal (AppDynamics), and Rishabh Goel (Credgenics) continue to redefine global tech landscapes. The report also honours industry titans and venture capital leaders whose influence extends worldwide, including Vinod Khosla (Sun Microsystems), Navin Chaddha (Mayfield Fund), and Pavan Jain (Samsara).

According to the Alumni Impact Report, approximately 10,000 IIT Delhi alumni occupy leadership positions in banking and finance, manufacturing, and the engineering industry. From the same 70 per cent of these alumni are based in India, and more than 1,000 alumni sit in the boardrooms of large and diverse corporate systems.

The report underscores the remarkable success of the IIT Delhi Endowment Fund, a testament to the generosity of its alumni. Built entirely through contributions from former students, the fund gives the Institute strategic independence to channel investments into cutting-edge research and infrastructure.

So far, the fund has secured Rs 477 crore in pledges, with Rs 338 crore already realised. In a gesture of gratitude, the Class of 2000 pledged over Rs 70 Crore during their silver jubilee reunion in December 2025. From 150 alumni in 1966 to 65,000 today.

IP University...

Science Engineering (Artificial Intelligence and Data Science), BTech in Computer Science and Business Systems, and programmes in Teacher Education and Inclusive Education.

The university has also launched the BA BEd (Special and Inclusive Education - ISITEP) programme with specialisations in autism spectrum disorder, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, learning disability, multiple disability and visual impairment.

In addition, nine new institutes have been affiliated with the university this year. Three programmes are already operational at the Narela campus, with several more programmes in the pipeline for the new campus. As in the previous year, candidates will be required to pay a one-time application fee of Rs 2,500, which covers both registration and counselling participation.

Admissions will be conducted through university-level CETs as well as national-level examinations such as JEE Main, NEET, CAT, CMAT, NIMCET and CLAT, among others. Vacant seats in certain UG and PG programmes, including BTech courses, will also be filled through CUET scores.

Candidates are advised to carefully go through the official admission brochure for detailed information. Further details and application forms are available on the official IP University admission portal at ipu.ac.in.

The admission brochures were jointly released by Delhi's Minister of Education, Ashish Sood, and the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof. (Dr.) Mahesh Verma.

IIT Delhi introduces new course on AI Fabrics and Systems

EJ - Delhi

Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIT Delhi) and the Indian affiliate of Marvell Technology, Inc., have launched a new programme - Networks for AI/ML Systems. The new programme is an advanced academic-industry course focused on the systems layer of modern AI, where networking fabrics, memory hierarchies, and distributed execution determine performance at scale, an official statement released in this regard said.

The programme was jointly planned to educate students on the realities as they appear in production AI infrastructure. The course was co-designed and is co-taught by Dr Rinku Shah (IIT-Delhi) and Abed Mohammad Kamaluddin, director at Marvell, with ongoing technical mentoring from Marvell engineers and architects.

Cambridge University...

are bringing the UK and India's world-class research and education even closer together through innovative platforms and channels for collaboration, helping unlock the full potential of our revitalised partnership," said Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India.

The Cambridge-India CAS is designed as an "umbrella" for a range of programmes, building on the many bilateral partnerships between the university and India over recent decades.

Working with partners, the multi-sited and multi-dimensional centre is set to act as a framework for a portfolio of activity across different parts of India "without the limits of a specific physical presence".

As part of other plans announced this week, the Cambridge University Men's Cricket Team will tour India for pre-season warm up games in March 2026 for the first time in 15 years. Plans are also under way for the Cambridge Women's team to visit India next year.

"Our best cricketers are looking forward to testing their skills against their Indian counterparts," the Vice-Chancellor stated.

Legendary Indian cricketer Ranjitsinhji (Ranji) was a student at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, at the end of the 19th century, as was his nephew, Duleepsinghi, a few years later.

Both received Cambridge Blues for representing the university, before going on to achieve even greater success at international level, the university highlighted.

Cambridge University is also planning to hold a UK-India partners event at Lord's Cricket Ground in London in May on the occasion of the historic Oxford-Cambridge Varsity cricket match held annually at the historic ground.

Besides Delhi, the senior Cambridge delegation covering Mumbai and Bengaluru this week includes Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Environmental Sustainability, Professor Bhaskar Vira, who is the first Indian Pro-Vice-Chancellor from India in the university's 800-year history.

"It has been wonderful to see the enthusiasm of our colleagues in Cambridge and our partners in India for the Cambridge-India CAS. I'm looking forward to this next chapter in the relationship between Cambridge and India," said Vira.

Additionally, IIT Delhi and Marvell are collaborating on research in AI networking and systems, with the course reinforcing and feeding into these joint research directions.

"Networks for AI/ML Systems is India's first and the first known course of its kind globally. By integrating AI networking, CXL-based memory systems and AI-scale simulation, the course exposes students to system-level challenges rarely addressed in traditional curricula," said Prof. Pushpendra Singh, Head, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT-Delhi.

Nearly 45 students from BTech, MTech and PhD programmes participated in the initial course, which followed a project-first, peer-driven pedagogy. A post-course survey showed a clear increase in student confidence in reasoning about AI systems, fabrics and distributed machine-learning workflows.

Student projects will span AI

fabrics and transports, CXL-aware training and inference, distributed training and serving pipelines, in-network compute, telemetry-driven optimization and ML-based security and observability. Students consistently identified the open-ended, systems-heavy nature of the projects as the most influential aspect of their learning, enabling them to explain complex system behavior, rather than just implementing tools.

The course seeks to demonstrate the impact of deep, voluntary industry-academia collaboration in emerging systems domains. It builds one of India's earliest cohorts trained specifically in AI/ML systems and fabrics, aligns with national priorities in AI compute and semiconductor capability, and positions IIT Delhi's role in next-generation AI systems education and research. IIT-Delhi and Marvell plan to deepen this collaboration through joint research initiatives.,

Skill Development...

on automation and Industry 4.0 to match the shift toward green economy practices. Environmental stewardship has appeared in the top ten fastest-growing skills for the first time, showing how climate change efforts are significantly reshaping job markets worldwide.

The Experience Gap

Experiential learning has become crucial in an increasingly competitive job market. In the Indian context, this trend is particularly pronounced. According to the India Skills Report 2026, over 92.8% of Indian students now prioritize internship experience, considering it essential for career readiness. This emphasis on practical exposure is strategic: 71% of employers now require a two- or four-year degree for entry-level positions (up from 55% in 2024), while 76% are hiring the same or fewer entry-level workers. With intensifying competition and rising credential requirements, hands-on internship experience has become essential for differentiating oneself in a crowded candidate pool and demonstrating job-ready skills that employers actively seek.

Strategic Action Plan

Only 42.6% of graduates are considered employable by industry standards, despite 89% of educators believing students are workforce-ready. This significant gap demands proactive action, especially as 39% of current skills will become outdated by 2030.

Start your job search and networking at least six months before graduation to gain a competitive edge. Leverage online platforms like Coursera, NPTEL, and Skill India for accessible upskilling opportunities. With rapid technological changes, commit to lifelong learning to stay relevant in your field. Despite technological advancement, communication skills (55.1% employability), critical thinking (54.6%), and leadership abilities (54.2%) remain indispensable across sectors, particularly in healthcare, education, and management roles. Cultivate emotional intelligence and empathy alongside technical expertise to create distinctive professional value.

The Path Forward: Emerging Opportunities

Despite challenges, opportunities abound across Indian sectors. India's job market is projected to add 12.8 million new jobs in

2026, with growth extending beyond metropolitan areas—Coimbatore emerged as the fastest-growing hiring market in 2025, with Tier-2 cities growing at 25% annually.

Healthcare: India faces an acute shortage of over 4 million nurses to meet WHO norms. Despite having over 3.3 million registered nursing personnel, this is grossly inadequate for India's 1.4 billion population. The healthcare sector is experiencing 62% growth, creating excellent opportunities for nursing and social work professionals.

Technology: The sector offers dual prospects with 20% growth and 40% surge in graduate hiring, though entry-level competition has intensified. Specialized roles in AI, data analytics, and cybersecurity face significant talent shortages, creating excellent opportunities for skilled graduates.

Care Economy: India's care economy is booming, projected to generate 60 million jobs by 2030, including counseling, mental health services, and eldercare. The mental health sector is particularly dynamic, growing 28-30% annually.

Green Economy: Environmental jobs are expanding rapidly, with renewable energy alone projected to add 1.7 million positions in the near term. The green transition represents one of India's fastest-growing employment sectors.

Gig Economy: Gig hiring grew 38% in 2025, with gigs now forming 16% of all jobs. The gig workforce is projected to reach tens of millions by 2030, offering flexible career pathways for graduates seeking alternative employment models.

Employability in 2026 requires strategic foresight, adaptability, and continuous skill development. Successful graduates view their degree as a foundation, building upon it with practical experience and emerging skills. By aligning education with growing sectors—from AI and healthcare to the care and green economies—and embracing lifelong learning, today's students can thrive in tomorrow's transformed job market. The opportunities are substantial: 12.8 million new jobs, expanding Tier-2 city markets, and diverse career pathways across traditional and emerging sectors. The question is not whether opportunities exist, but whether graduates are prepared to seize them.

Cambridge University launches new research hub as it expands India outreach



■ EJ - London

The University of Cambridge announced an expanded outreach in India with the launch of a new research hub and additional entry pathways for top tier undergraduate students.

The Cambridge-India Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS) will focus on innovation, research and learning, establishing a bridge between one of the world's leading universities in the UK and India's

growing knowledge economy.

The new centre is expected to operate as a hub for the university's presence in India, serving as a catalyst for intellectual exchange, policy influence and societal impact.

"The Cambridge-India CAS is an exciting opportunity to form collaborations with the best researchers and innovators in India and strengthen ties with such a rapidly growing knowledge economy," said Cambridge Vice-Chancellor

Deborah Prentice.

Leading a senior delegation to Delhi this week, Professor Prentice also unveiled plans for the CBSE Class XII qualification to be accepted by the university for "some undergraduate courses, alongside additional requirements".

It comes as Cambridge established the Cambridge India Research Foundation, a company to enable members of the public, Cambridge alumni and other stakeholders to provide funds for bursaries, fees and other expenses incurred by Indian students studying in Cambridge, as well as supporting research partnerships. It is aimed at exploring new philanthropic opportunities for the funding of scholarships for India's most talented students.

"Education lies at the heart of UK-India Vision 2035 - our shared commitment to nurturing the next generation of global talent. These initiatives

>> Contd. p.4..

Sector backs Harvard international students in Trump legal fight



■ EJ - Agency

This week, the American Council on Education (ACE) was joined by 22 higher education associations filing an amicus brief in support of Harvard against the administration's efforts to uphold Trump's June 2025 proclamation barring international students from the institution.

"If the federal government may punish a university for its perceived ideology or that of its students, then the marketplace of ideas collapses into a monopoly of dogma," the brief warns.

It urges the court to affirm the preliminary injunction issued by Judge Allison Burroughs last June, which blocked Trump's attempt to prohibit foreign nationals seeking to study at Harvard from entering the US.

The signatories have said the proclamation represents an unprecedented executive overreach threatening institutional autonomy and academic freedom, as well as violating the First Amendment.

"Over the last year, the current administration has engaged in an unprecedented effort to coerce institutions of higher education to behave in a manner that reflects the administration's preferred ideology, including by reshaping their faculty, curriculum and student body," the document reads.

"When Harvard resisted the administration's unlawful demands, the administration retaliated with extreme sanctions, in-

cluding the proclamation issued in this appeal."

The case arises from multiple attempts by the Trump administration bar international students from attending the Ivy League institution last spring.

Initial efforts were led by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) attempting to strip Harvard of its SEVP Certification, which enables US institutions to enrol international students - a move halted by federal district judge Allison Burroughs.

Weeks later, Trump escalated efforts and issued his own presidential proclamation aimed at achieving the same result, which was met with a preliminary injunction from judge Burroughs, who said Trump's directive implicated core constitutional protections.

Appealing judge Burroughs' decision, the administration argued the proclamation was legal under the president's immigration authorities - citing the familiar argument relating to national security concerns. This took the case to First Circuit appeals court, where it is now being heard.

Trump's proclamation cites Harvard's alleged "violent crime rates" and deficient reporting on foreign students as rationales for the directive, alongside its "entanglements" with the Chinese Communist Party and "discriminatory" admissions practices reducing opportunities for American students.

The brief argues that the proclamation is "fundamentally inconsistent with institutional autonomy - at Harvard and other educational

institutions across the country" and that the administration's actions are unconstitutional and set a dangerous precedent for all US colleges.

"The administration's actions at issue in this case are directed at Harvard, but they reverberate throughout every state in the nation," the brief states, arguing that punishing a university for its perceived ideology is "the antithesis of American values".

It highlights the targeted nature of Trump's directive, which would allow international students into the US seeking to study at any institution but Harvard - signalling the intervention is punitive, not regulatory, the amici said.

They emphasise the value of international students, "who ... enrich and strengthen our community in innumerable ways".

"But these benefits are unattainable when schools are prohibited from enrolling international students because they do not pass the government's ideological litmus test."

The brief contextualises the case within the administration's long-running assault on Harvard, involving the freezing of federal grant funding, threats to Harvard's tax-exempt status and requests for information regarding Harvard's international students.

The administration's appeal is expected to be considered in the coming months.

In the federal funding fight, judge Burroughs found in September 2025 that the administration acted unlawfully when it cut Harvard's research grants - a case also heading to the court of appeal after the administration disputed the ruling.

Despite the ongoing attacks on America's oldest institution, Harvard's overseas enrolments rose to their highest level since 2002 this academic year, making up 28% of the total university population

AI in English language education: Has the discourse changed?



■ EJ - Dr Carla Pastorino

It can feel like the rhetoric around AI is shifting as fast as its ability to generate content. In the English language education sector, we only need look to the recent past to recall how searching questions like "will we need humans in the future?" and "is it game over for teachers?" were the focus of every conference agenda, leadership summit and coffee room discussion.

These types of questions resonate in all sectors of industry, and it was no surprise to see a recent episode of Dispatches on Channel 4 ask: "will AI take my job?"

More focus on practical and ethical considerations

But recently, something's changed. We are becoming more comfortable with the idea that we can meaningfully coexist with this technology. And, with this change, industry leaders and policymakers in English language education are becoming more focussed on the practical and ethical questions around delivering AI in education, such as: how and when AI should be used and, in some cases, should it even be used at all?

This marks a welcome shift in perspective, one where people accept that this technology is here to stay but are genuinely engaging with how we can take sensible steps to get the best out of it. It's critical to remember that ethical considerations for AI shouldn't just be a simple box ticking exercise, as pointed out by UNESCO UK in their 2025 anthology - which says ethical AI in education is about building fair,

human-centred systems that truly support meaningful learning.

'Why' is the biggest question of all!

When it comes to AI in education, 'why' is perhaps the biggest question we need to ask ourselves. The short answer to this is: 'if it adds value.' We also need to ask: 'does it make sense'. Ethical concerns come in many shapes and sizes, but one we cannot ignore is the sustainability challenges surrounding this energy hungry technology.

So, before embarking on any AI related project in our sector, it's critical to ask whether we in fact need it, or if there are more sustainable options available. In other words: do we need to build a new large language model (LLM), or does an existing method, or simpler alternative, work just as well and have a far smaller carbon footprint?

How should we use AI?

In terms of how we should use AI, again there are lots of practical and ethical considerations. Whether you're using AI to teach or assess English, at the heart of this must be a human in control. The need for maintaining a 'human in the loop' is for several reasons, but mainly because learning a language is a very human-centred process and, while AI can bring enormous benefits, it cannot replicate the uniquely human experience of acquiring and using language. And, of course, there are practical reasons too - especially when it comes to quality control in assessment, where we

need humans to sometimes step in and offer oversight and clarity.

What about high stakes assessment?

This need for a 'human in the loop' is particularly pertinent in high-stakes assessment. It's essential that in these cases, we do not prioritise convenience over quality, and we continue to develop robust solutions. If we use the technology to cut corners, this ultimately does a disservice to students and runs the risk of them not developing the English skills they need for success.

The ingredients for trustworthy AI

If we are serious about delivering ethical AI, another area to consider is fairness and ensuring that systems are free from bias. To achieve this, it's critical that AI-based language learning and assessment systems are trained on diverse and inclusive data and are constantly monitored for bias. And of course, we have to consider data privacy and consent which in practice means all parties must be clearly informed about what data is collected, how it's stored, and how it is going to be used.

A week is a long time in AI!

The extraordinary pace of change when it comes to AI reminds me of the famous quote about how a week is a long time in politics. One thing is certain: we're at a significant moment for language education. As we continue to shift towards a future where human-led AI can deliver high quality education, it is more critical than ever to ensure that ethical use matters. Fairness, transparency, and sustainability must remain non negotiable. Without this, AI will fast lose credibility in English language learning and assessment - to the detriment of both innovation and our students.

Ultimately, our collective goal as education leaders is simple: to deliver meaningful AI that meets robust ethical standards and adds true value for learners.



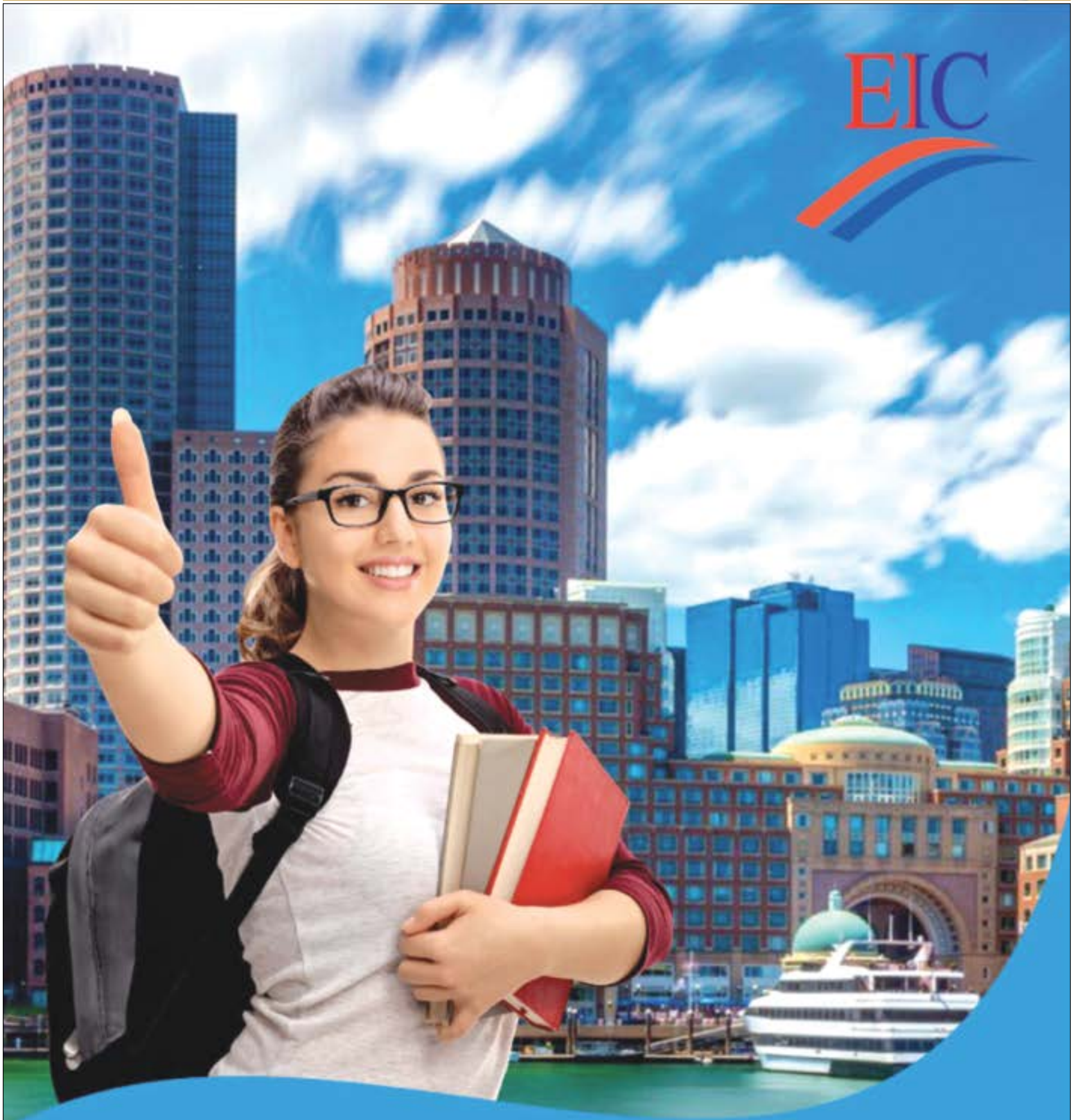
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