INDIA

International Column'

Eka Sepiashvili
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I am Eka Sepiashvili, a mentor English teacher from Georgia. This is my second time sharing my experience with you through your newspaper. I am glad I am making a small contribution to the motivated teachers working together in the international educational space.

Based on my pedagogical practice, I can confidently say that it is a great pleasure for me to work with students, I have special approaches in my relationship with them, and as a result, I get high academic achievements both in school assessments and national exams.

My students participate in numerous regional and international competitions and are ac*tively*

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No distance or online courses, autonomy to hire staff: UGC regulations for foreign varsities

■ **EJ News** - *Agency*

The University Grants Commission (UGC) today announced regulations for the establishment and operation of campuses by foreign universities in India.

As per the regulations, foreign universities cannot open learning centers, study centers, or franchises of parent entities in India. The commission has also barred foreign universities from offering online courses or distance learning.

The guidelines have been prepared in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which has envisioned that top universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India. UGC chairman M Jagadesh Kumar said, "The regulations aim to facilitate the entry of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEIs) into India...and to provide an international dimension to higher education in India."

"These regulations aim to ensure that the education imparted in the (India) campus is at par with that of the main campus in the country of origin and that its operations comply with the applicable laws and regulations," he said. According to the regulations, "Foreign institutions intending to establish campuses in India should have secured a position within the top 500 in the overall category of global rankings, as decided by the commission from time to time, or should have secured a position within the top 500 in the subjectwise category of global rankings and should possess outstanding expertise in a particular area...."

In case an FHEI desires to receive or utilize foreign contributions, it will have to obtain registration or prior permission under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, and comply with legal requirements under the FCRA, the UGC stated.

In their Indian campuses, foreign universities will be allowed to offer study programs leading to the award of certificates, diplomas, degrees, research, and other programs at the undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral, and post-doctoral levels.

"Foreign universities cannot open learning centers, study centers, or franchises that may act as representative offices of the parent entity to undertake promotional activities for their programs in their home jurisdiction or any other jurisdiction outside India. They are required to seek prior approval from the commission before starting any new program in their campus in India," the regulations said.

"No programs can be offered online or in Open and Distance Learning modes under these regulations.

However, lectures in an online mode not exceeding 10 percent of the program requirements are allowed," it added.

"Two or more than two universities can collaborate to set up campuses in India, provided each institution meets the eligibility criteria individually. Each foreign university can set up more than one campus in India. However, they shall make a separate application for each proposed campus to the commission," the regulations stated.

Foreign institutions need not pay any annual fees to the UGC other than the one-time application fees. They shall set up their campuses using their infrastructure, land, physical resources, and human resources.

Foreign universities may provide in their Indian campuses full or partial merit-based or need-based scholarships and fee concessions to Indian students.

"Foreign Higher Educational Institutions can admit students and collect fees in their campuses in India only after a notification has been issued by the UGC permitting them to commence their campus operations in India

JEE Advanced: First time in five years, 45 IIT seats have not been filled

■ **EJ News** - *New Delhi*

JEE ADVANCE

This year, 17,340 candidates have been allotted seats in the 23 Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) after six rounds of the Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) counseling process, including 3,422 female candidates. The total number of available seats in IITs was 17,385, leaving 45 seats vacant, which is the first in the past five years.

As per the data of the last five years, the number of seats allotted at the end of JoSAA has always been more than the number of available seats at the beginning of the counseling process. Last year, as many as 16,598 seats were available but the allotted seats were 16,635. In 2021, 16,232 seats were

Indian students to the US increase 35% in 2022-23

■ **EJ News** - *Agency*

International students from India to the US increased by 35 percent, reaching an all-time high of 2,68,923 in 2022/23. India has also surpassed China to become the largest host of international graduate students in the US for the first time since 2009/10.

Report, an annual statistical survey on international students in the US. China and India remain the two leading places of origin among international students at US colleges and universities. 53 percent of all international students in 2022/23 were from China and India, comparable to the previous year.

The number of Indian graduate students soared, increasing 63 percent to 1,65,936 students, an increase of nearly 64,000 students compared to last year. In addition, there was a 16 percent uptick in the number of undergraduates.

India remains the leading place of origin for international students pursuing Optional Practical Training (OPT), with a modest increase of 1 percent, according to the 2023 Open Doors

However, the market share for each place of origin has shifted, with 27 percent of students from China and 25 percent of students from India (compared to 33 percent from China and 18 percent from India in 2017/18), the data show.

The number of students staying in the US to gain practical work experience after graduation on OPT grew by 8 percent to 198,793 students in 2022/23.

The importance of non-formal education

Non-formal education is a complementary education to formal education. It develops the child's critical thinking and has a broader concept of learning focusing on practical knowledge.

Formal education is most prevalent in society, but there are alternatives to formal education. Non-formal education is a structured, organized educational activity that is carried outside the usual framework of schools. It encompasses various learning methods through recreational tools to multiple subgroups in the population.

Non-formal education may or may not be carried inside the educational institutions, and it has no age restrictions. It may cater to various learning programs like adult literacy, fundamental education for non-school-going children, life skills or culture, and diversity. It promotes the need for education for all, generating national income and more adaptable employment opportunities. It also assists in the transfer of proper educational equipment to more need-based areas. Non-formal education develops a wide range of learning and productive skills with substantial gains.

What is the best example of non-formal education?

Non-formal learning typically occurs in community settings: swimming classes for small children, sports clubs of various kinds for all ages, reading groups, debating societies, amateur choirs and orchestras, and so on.

Today's children are keenly interested in digital devices and attach strong meanings to them. The school has an important role in the socialization of the individual. Therefore, the purpose of education is to develop the talents and capacities of individuals according to the needs of society, to prepare them for the environment in which they live, and thus to ensure the development and protection of the community. As such, there is a need for learning environments in which the contents of the courses provide the basis for children to socialize in society through personal experience. *"Drama can be defined as the enactment of an event, memory, concept, subject and thought by using theatrical techniques such as role-playing and improvisation in the workshop environment by leaders and participants".*

The drama method can be successfully used in learning environments because it is a method that enables cognitive, affective, and dynamic gains to occur, and allows children to learn by living, discussing, and expressing themselves freely. One of the best ways to teach a subject is by presenting a drama with real-life examples in the classroom. Drama has four uses: creative drama, educational drama, psychodrama, and social drama.). In music education, educational drama has been used the most frequently. However, the type of drama that is necessary for the teaching of any phenomenon, concept, or subject is educational drama. The present study focuses on the learning-teaching process of educational drama in music education.

Accordingly, educational drama is defined as follows: *"A verbal and non-verbal, spontaneous, simulated enactment of an action, event, emotion, roles, concepts, themes or stories, living or inanimate beings, and even poetry".* Regarding the use of drama in education, Wagner said: *"Role play is improvised. There is no need for text or memorization when presenting the drama performance. The key point is the deliberate use of drama to teach a particular subject."* Regarding the effectiveness of using drama in various disciplines, he further underscores that it is particularly effective for students to

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involved in projects and activities in the direction of informal education.

Today I would like to share with you activities promoting non-formal education that I have already implemented in my practice.

reenact historical events (Wagner, 1976; Wagner, 1998). The use of drama and other arts in learning environments also closely ties in with the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Gardner. Visual arts, music, dance, drama, and such forms of intelligence emerged not only to enable many students to communicate and express themselves but also as effective tools to learn any subject. Although it is a common method, studies on the use of drama in music education are limited.

To teach music to children today, when the events are unfolding faster and time is flowing faster, it is important to know the characteristics of those children and act accordingly. Having been accustomed to skipping episodes in the computer games they play, and being very familiar with continuous movement and progress, for the learners today the drama method is much more desirable in their music classes because it allows them to feel the constantly dynamic progress as if they move on the next level in a game. This requires music teachers to be prepared for this. In other words, the music teacher should know what to do (structure it) and act accordingly.
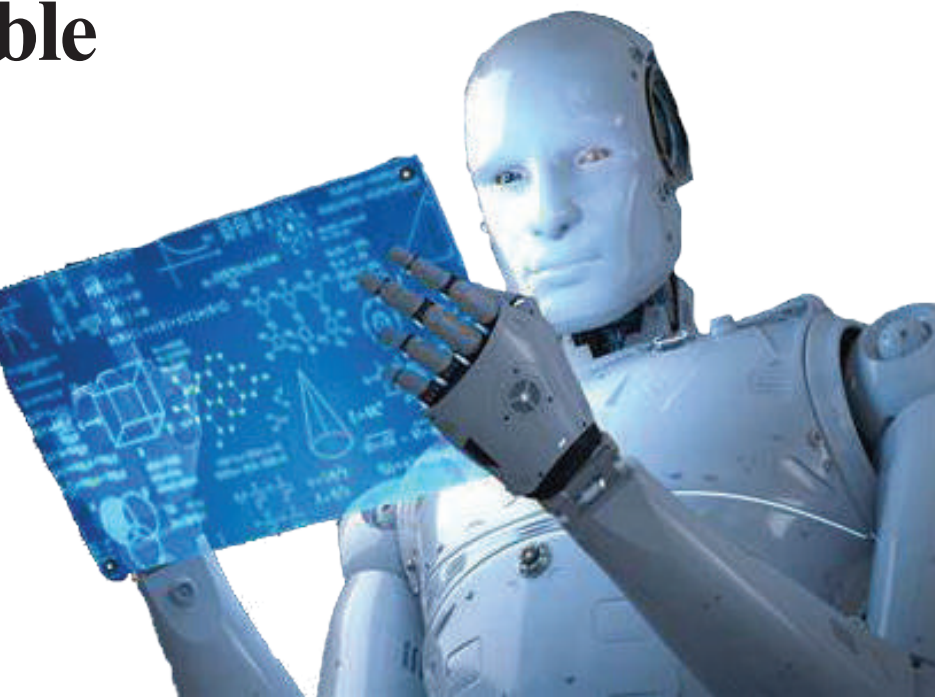
General benefits of art and craft activities

Research into child development shows that children benefit in several ways from doing arts and crafts. Below are some of the main ones:

- **Bilateral coordination**
Kids need to develop the ability to use both sides of their bodies to coordinate movements in an organized and controlled manner.

- **Fine motor coordination**
Kids need to be able to use the small muscles of their body, especially their hands, to perform more delicate tasks. Using scissors, gripping crayons to color, staying within the lines, and holding a piece of paper to glue in place are tasks requiring fine motor skills.

- **Self-regulation**
Kids need to develop the ability to manage their emotions and behavior when faced with a difficult task. While doing crafts, they will have to be able to wait their turn, cope with things not going how they wanted, be willing to share, and resist impulsive behavior.

- **Social skills**
While doing arts and crafts, kids will usually need to work with others, even if it's only you they're working with. They develop the skills they need to treat others with respect and kindness. They might need to share materials, comment on each others' work, help with activities, wait their turn patiently, etc.

- **Creativity and imagination**
Doing arts and crafts gives children the space to use their creativity and express themselves. This may simply manifest itself in their choice of color or where they choose to stick an object. We're not talking about the ability to create a masterpiece!

- **Motivation**
Most kids enjoy doing arts and crafts and it's often the part of the lesson they most look forward to. Being engaged in doing something they enjoy creates favorable conditions for language acquisition.

Making engineering students more employable

Engineering is considered to be a prestigious degree by most Indian parents and students. A survey by NASSCOM says that India produces nearly 1.5 million engineers. It is astonishing to know that only 3% of these engineers successfully get high-quality tech jobs. An Ed-tech startup known as Scaler has released data that 80% of the engineers are pursuing non-technical careers due to a scarcity of employment opportunities. This scenario raises a big question on the education curriculum and the measures taken by the colleges to develop the skill set of budding engineers. The curriculum should be designed to help the students acquire industry-oriented skill sets so that they pursue careers in their stream of graduation. The issue can be addressed by identifying the reason for the gaps and then developing solutions to overcome them.

There has been a massive expansion in the number of engineering colleges and enrollment of students in the last decade. The enrollment ratio is higher as compared to other undergraduate courses. It is moreover considered to be a prestigious degree and therefore parents prefer sending their youngsters to study engineering. The sudden increase in engineering colleges might have more people fulfill their dream of becoming an engineer. At the same time getting admission to an engineering college has become easier. A high score is no more a limitation. The mushrooming of private institutions has created more opportunities for becoming engineers. They get admission to the course but lack the interest and capability to convert themselves into successful engineers.

Faculty or staff of the college plays a crucial role in shaping the career of the students. It has been observed that intellectual minds refrain from entering the teaching field due to a lack of opportunities for financial growth. Most of the private institutions do not pay good salaries. Engineering graduates, therefore, prefer to work in other sectors. One of the challenges faced by private colleges is to appoint a good faculty. In the absence of competent teachers, we cannot expect the students to prepare themselves to be compatible with the fast-changing world. The syllabus, laboratory, and infrastructure have not been updated for many years in several universities. It is not sufficient for an engineer to complete a four-year degree course. The engineering graduate is expected to possess hard skills and soft skills as per the industry requirements. Some of the measures that can be taken at the institute level to make engineers employable are:

- **Quality Faculty:** Teachers are an integral part of the education system. The staff should be encouraged to use creative methods to make the class interesting. Along with this, the teachers should be encouraged to training that helps to update their knowledge of the current changes in their respective branches. The teachers should be allowed to go for 2-3 weeks of industrial training. Practical experience is equally essential for teachers. When the teachers gain practical knowledge they can disseminate it efficiently among their students.

- **Generating Self-Interest among Students:** Most students enter an Engineering college either under the pressure of parents or due to the influence of friends. In due course of time, they realize that they have landed in the wrong place. The academic pattern should be planned to generate self-interest among the students. Most of the institutions conduct activities that have been practiced for decades. There is a need to explore novelty in the activities. Playful learning, project-based learning; blended learning, and research-based learning should be encouraged. Engineering colleges give more importance to technical events. But young students are sometimes not interested in it. The institutions should therefore try to have activities that will fulfill technical aspects and will be interesting too. For example, if it is World Environment Day let them make a wall magazine that will describe the latest technologies that can save the earth. One more issue that needs attention is that institutions instruct students to make projects based on the research interests of their faculty. The students should be allowed to identify local problems and develop solutions for them. When the students are allowed to choose their projects they will be more interested and will work diligently. Otherwise, they complete the projects to satisfy their teachers without having the zeal to learn something new.

- **Industrial Collaboration:** Industrial exposure is the best method to make the students aware of the requirements of the industry. Industrial training, visits, and internships should be made compulsory. Some of the students are unable to go for internships due to the fees charged by the industries. The colleges should have MoUs with the nearby industries to facilitate the internships, training, and visits. The students can be encouraged to do their projects with the industries too. Besides this, industry persons should be invited for guest lectures to discuss the requirements and expectations of the industry so that students update their skills accordingly. The industry persons should be included in the advisory com-

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CM Yogi Adityanath distributes degrees to KIET students on Silver Jubilee

EJ– *Ghaziabad*

KIET Group organized a grand Silver Jubilee Celebration and Degree Distribution Ceremony on campus. The event was graced with the benign presence of Shri Yogi Adityanath, Honourable Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, as the Esteemed Chief Guest.

The moment CM, Yogi entered KIET, everyone on the campus was in awe of his warm and strong personality. The event proceeded and began with CM's welcome with a bouquet. Shri Atul Garg, Chairman, Governing Board-KIET along with other members in the Management, greeted and escorted CM Yogi to the Centre for Automotive Mechatronics and Centre for Advanced Woodworking, wherein the concerned faculty coordinators explained their association with Mercedez Benz India and BIESSE India.

The team along with Yogi Ji proceeded to inaugurate the institute's new academic block, followed by his visit to different Centers of Excellence, including Space Technology, Robotics, and Drone Technology.

CM Yogi was then escorted to the main event venue, wherein he was welcomed with an oxy plant and a memento. During his address, Yogi Ji said, "I have come to congratulate the institute on completing 25 years of academic journey. I congratulate Atul Ji and his team for introducing new-age courses like robotics, and space technologies, they are shaping and polishing the new generation of India. After coming to KIET, I went through all the workshops here and learned that the institute started with only 3 courses and now many courses affiliated with AKTU are taught here." He also highlighted the benefits of using AI and the latest technology.

On the occasion of completing 25 years of excellence, the celebration began with a video that highlighted the journey of the institute in the past two and a half decades. The institute's Director, Dr. A Garg took charge of presenting an institutional progress report, wherein he highlighted the major developments and achievements bagged by the institute in the past 25 years.

The program proceeded with the Degree Distribution Ceremony, in which 1639 meritorious students of batch 2022 were awarded degrees. These included 27 University rank holders, who stood in the top 10 positions and won 6 gold, 1 silver, and 6 bronze medals, such as Rohan Khurana, CSE branch, Vidhi Agarwal, MCA and Sandeep Kumar, CE branch, etc. Apart from these, the institute also honored distinguished alumni, long-serving dedicated employees, and notable startups that were established with the support of TBI-KIET.

On this occasion, Shri VK Singh, Minister of State, Central Government, Shri Narendra Kashyap, Minister of State, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Anil Aggarwal, MP Rajya Sabha, Ms. Sunita Dayal, Mayor Ghaziabad, Ms. Mamta Tyagi, Zila Panchayat Adhyaksh Ghaziabad, Shri Ajit Pal Tyagi, MLA Muradnagar, Governing Council members of the institute, Institute's Director, Joint Director, faculty and staff members, young graduates, university rank holders, startup entrepreneurs, top alumni, and media representatives were also present.

Application invited for admission to Sainik schools

EJ News - *New Delhi*

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has released the exam schedule for the All-India Sainik Schools Entrance Examination (AISSEE)-2024 for classes 6 and 9. The admissions are open for 33 Sainik Schools across the country. Interested and eligible candidates who wish to be admitted here can fill out the application forms by December 16, 2023.

The date of the exam has been scheduled for January 21, 2024. The exam pattern will have Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) to be held in pen-paper mode. The examination fee for candidates belonging to the general category and wards of defense personnel and ex-servicemen/OBC is ₹ 650. The exam fee for students belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is ₹ 500. The last date for payment of fees through debit/ credit card or internet banking/ UPI is December 16, 2023.

Students willing to take admission in class 6 at Sainik schools should be between the age group of 10-12 years as of March 31, 2023. Admission for girls is open for class 6, subject to the availability of vacancies. The age criteria for female students is the same as that of boys. For taking admission to class 9, candidates should be between the age group of 13-15 years as of March 31, 2024, and should have passed class 8 from a recognized school. Admission for girls is open for class 9,

Sainik schools are English medium residential schools affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). They prepare cadets to join the National Defence Academy, Indian Naval Academy, and other Training Academies for officers. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has approved 19 New Sainik Schools, which operate in partnership with NGOs/private schools/State Governments. These approved New Sainik Schools function under the Sainik Schools Society. Admission to the Sainik School stream of class 6 of the New Sainik Schools, for the academic year 2024-25 is also through AIS-SEE-2024.

AKTU sacks IET registrar

EJ– *Lucknow*

The committee set up to probe the allegations against former Registrar Sachin Kumar Singh at AKTU has made strong comments about the documents that came to light during the investigation. The probe panel said that documentary evidence shows that the then AKTU and IET officials had committed a premeditated robbery.

The report of the inquiry against the former registrar was tabled in the executive council meeting of the university. In this, the committee has given a detailed report on the points of investigation. At the same time, it has also been said that this has happened to the funds related to the education of students of more than 750 colleges running in the state by AKTU for technical education.

The inquiry report said that the then vice-chancellor of the university and the top executive body of AKTU, IET director and registrar had completely failed in discharging and supervising their administrative duties. No one is beyond doubt, especially with regard to matters related to the finances of the two institutions and the misuse of funds of the institutions. The committee has also said that both the institutions suffered a lot directly or indirectly. Their own officers are involved in this loot.

The committee has said in its assessment that the officers having the power of supervision and control of both the institutions need to pay attention to this systematic loot. In this regard, there is an urgent need for effective steps on the part of the authorities to stop the misappropriation of money here and make them accountable for the organized loot of funds of the above institutions. The report was read out in full at the executive council meeting of the university. It has also been agreed to investigate other people involved in this case.

IIT Bombay extends registration deadline for CEED, UCEED 2024

EJ News - *Mumbai*

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Bombay) has extended the registration deadline for the Undergraduate Common Entrance Exam for Design (UCEED 2024) and Common Entrance Exam For Design (CEED) 2024. Candidates have time till November 13 to register for CEED and UCEED.

To register for UCEED 2024, candidates need to visit succeed. iitb.ac.in/2024/, and for CEED 2024 registration, the website is used.iitb.ac.in/2024/.

As per the official schedule released by IIT Bombay for CEED and UCEED, the last date for online registration with a regular fee has been extended to November 13, and the last date for online registration with a late fee is November 20, 2023. The admit cards for CEED and UCEED 2024 will be available at 1 pm on January 5, and the exam will be held from 9 am to 12 pm on January 21.

ISRO prods Indian youth to design robotic rovers for future missions

EJ - *New Delhi*

ISRO is inviting ideas and designs of robotic rovers for future missions from students. The U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) will conduct 'ISRO Robotics Challenge, URSC-2024' to provide opportunities to the students in the area of space robotics. Students can submit the registration form along with a proposal between November 20 and December 15.

After the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 Vikram on the lunar surface and the exploration near the southern pole of the moon, ISRO said it is gearing up for future robotic exploration missions to the moon and other celestial bodies.

The national space agency headquartered here said it is committed to creating unique opportunities for academia and industry to participate in technology development activities commensurate with organizational objectives.

The challenge consists of an engineering project where the institutional teams build robots to compete in an extra-terrestrial-inspired arena, performing tasks based on the real-life challenges faced by space robotics.

"This is an invitation for the student community for the design and realization of a 'Wheeled/ Legged Rover' encompassing the development of complete hardware and software. The solutions provided by the students in IRoC-U 2024 have a greater chance of getting incorporated into ISRO's future interplanetary robotics missions," an ISRO statement said.

Deakin University GIFT City campus opens admissions

Deakin University India campus is offering masters programmes in business analytics and cyber security with fee approximately Rs 10 lakh each.

EJ - *Gandhinagar*

Australia's Deakin University, the first foreign university to set up an international campus at GIFT City in Gandhinagar, started seeking applications on Tuesday for its two postgraduate programs – session starting July 2024 – at an annual fee of AUD 19,000 (around Rs 10.7 lakh).

This was announced during the second day of the visit by the Australian delegation to Gujarat, led by Education Minister Jason Clare.

Australia's University in Wollongong, meanwhile, announced that it will start seeking applications at its GIFT City branch for masters in computing (data analytics) from January next year for the July 2024 session. The university will open admission for its undergraduate program in computing in 2025.

"Today marks a historic milestone in India's journey in the field of higher education, as we celebrate the announcement of two campuses, Deakin and University in Wollongong in GIFT City," Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said.

He was speaking at the 'Arambh (The Beginning): Australian University Campuses in India' program at Gift City. The Australian delegation, along with Pradhan, also visited the under-construction sites of both the Deakin and Wollongong campuses.

The 25,000 sq ft campus of Deakin University is set to be inaugurated in January 2024, likely during the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. Applications for admission will be accepted till March 31.

"We will charge AUD 19,000, which is nearly Rs 10 lakh per annum. The cost of living will be around Rs 2.5 lakh per annum for students. That is roughly half the cost of what a student has to pay on the Australian campus," Deakin University Vice-Chancellor Prof Iain Martin said.

He added that from next year, the university will offer master's programs in cyber security (professional) and business analytics. "Each of these are two-year courses and applications for admission will be accepted from today. We see the strength of this site (GIFT City) is the interface with industry. We want to be a part of this knowledge, technology, and finance ecosystem here," he said.

"This will be an Australian university operating in India with Australian characteristics but Indian culture… Students will study a Deakin curriculum, follow the same calendar… In time, we hope that Australian students will spend some time here and vice versa…," Prof Martin said.

The University of Wollongong, meanwhile, also announced the launch of a global collaboration for women in fintech.

"When our campus opens in July 2024, we will be targeting scholarships for women in fintech… we will be leveraging our campuses in Dubai, Sydney, and Malaysia to create networks and sponsorships for women in fintech… also leveraging the companies here (GIFT City) and our alumni… to join us in this endeavor," University of Wollongong Vice-Chancellor and president, Prof Patricia M Davidson, said.

Maintaining that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, Pradhan said: "Today, we are taking that very step… two very credible Australian universities, both 50 years old, have had Indian relations for the last three decades."

"The introduction of foreign university campuses in India perfectly aligns with the vision outlined in National Education Policy, 2020. This transformative policy emphasizes 'Internationalization at Home', aiming to create a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive educational environment within our own country," he said.

"Gujarat is the land of opportunities, a progressive state with a vibrant economy, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and ease of doing business ecosystem. Gujarat is the leading growth engine of India. The campus of these two Australian universities in GIFT City is a gift that the nation has been looking forward to," he added.

Pradhan further said, "With the presence of renowned international institutions, we are seeking to foster rich cultural and academic exchanges, where students and faculty from different corners of the world will collaborate, learn, and grow together. This will not only elevate the quality of education but also empower our students with a global perspective, essential in today's interconnected world."

SSC Exam calendar 2024-25 released

EJ - *Agency*

The Staff Selection Commission (SSC) has released the examination schedule for 2024. Individuals preparing for SSC Recruitment 2024 examinations can now access information about the notification release dates, application commencement, and exam dates for various exams. These exams include the Combined Graduate Level, Central Armed Police Forces, Junior Engineer (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Quantity Surveying & Contracts), Combined Higher Secondary (10+2) Level, and sub-inspector in Delhi Police.

As per the calendar, the Grade 'C' Stenographer Limited Departmental, the JSA/LDC Grade Limited Departmental, and the SSA/UDC Grade Limited Departmental competitive examinations for 2023-2024 are scheduled for April to May 2025. Notifications for these exams will be issued on January 5, 12, and 19, respectively.

The Selection Post Exam Phase-12, 2024 notification will be released on February 1, with the application period running from February 1 to 28. The exam is set to take place in April and May 2024. Additionally, the notifications for the Sub-Inspector in Delhi Police and the Central Armed Police Forces Exam are scheduled for release on February 15, with the application window open from February 15 to March 14, and the exams happening in May and June. The Junior Engineer (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Quantity Surveying & Contracts) Exam notification is slated for February 29, the application period from February 29 to March 29, and the exam will take place in May and June.

US increase 35%...

The growth in 14,034 students on OPT is likely driven by the strong rebound of graduate students last year and ended the two years of declines among students pursuing OPT amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority of leading places of origin experienced rebounds, with 23 of the top 25 places of origin increasing and 14 returning to pre-pandemic enrollment levels. Furthermore, 8 of the top 25 reached all-time highs: Bangladesh, Colombia, Ghana, India, Italy, Nepal, Pakistan, and Spain, the data show.

The total number of international students, including both enrolled and OPT students, surpassed 1 million and rebounded to near pre-pandemic levels, with 1,057,188 international students at US higher education institutions in 2022/23. The 12 percent growth in 2022/23 is the fastest international student growth rate in more than 40 years (+12 percent in 1978/79). The year-on-year growth of 108,000 international students studying at U.S. higher education institutions was the largest in Open Doors history.

Open Doors 2023 continued to include international students enrolled at US higher education institutions in the United States and online from abroad and those OPT. Approximately 95 percent of students were located physically in the United States to pursue their studies. International student representation increased to 6 percent of the total US higher education population, the data showed.

Engineering students...

mittee of the college. The syllabus drafting committee should compulsorily include an expert from the industry.

• **Making them Good humans:** Colleges should put more effort into converting their students into good human beings. Along with the technical stuff mindfulness, voluntary services, sports, meditation, and the 10 core life skills (empathy, self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, communication skills, decision-making, problem-solving, managing emotions, and stress) should be given equal importance. This will ensure good physical and mental health.

Everyone prepares the students to be successful. But we should prepare them to face and overcome failures. The education curriculum needs rejuvenation. Some small initiatives can cause a paradigm shift and turn our budding engineers capable of handling responsible positions in renowned industries in India and other parts of the world.

45 IIT...

available at the beginning of the admission process as against 16,296 total seat allotment after the sixth round of admission.

Explaining this, Prof Bishnupada Mandal, organizing chairperson of JEE Advanced 2023, said, "The number of allotted seats is generally more than the number of originally available seats. This is because supernumerary seats are created during admissions rounds, in situations of tie for certain seats. This does not mean there is no vacancy."

Supernumerary seats are created in case of a tie for admission in certain popular branches of IITs for which a greater number of candidates are applying. Due to this in some IITs, allotted seats are shown more than originally available seats. Whereas in some IITs, vacancy can be witnessed in particular branches.

"But such vacancy in particular branches of IITs is more evident, due to overall allotment which is generally higher than the available seats. But an explicit difference in available and allotted seats this year indicates if students are finding non-IIT options to be more attractive, post-pandemic," said an IIT Delhi professor, requesting to remain anonymous.

Another professor from IIT Bombay said, "Students also choose to opt out of JoSAA in case they know they are not likely to get admission to their desired course or IIT. And therefore opt to go for non-IIT institutes."

However, Prof Mandal reasoned that this difference in seats could be because of no or fewer tie-break scenarios. "This could be because there were fewer or no reasons to create supernumerary seats," Prof Mandal said, adding that he would have to further look into the data.

In 2023 too, IIT Bombay continues to remain the most preferred IIT for toppers with 245 of 1000 rankers of JEE Advanced followed by IIT Delhi with 208 candidates from the top 1000 rankers.

New generation IITs including IIT Hyderabad, IIT BHU, and IIT Indore are also seen attracting a considerable number of top 1000 rankers from the JEE Advanced. While 38 candidates were allotted seats in IIT Hyderabad, IIT BHU and IIT Indore admitted 23 and 2 students from the top 1000 rankers, respectively.

Foreign varsities..

under these regulations."

Campuses of foreign universities in India shall have autonomy to recruit faculty and staff as per their recruitment norms, it stated.

The foreign higher educational institution shall decide the fee structure, which shall be transparent and reasonable.

Based on an evaluation process, the institution may provide full or partial merit-based or need-based scholarships from funds such as endowment funds, alumni donations, tuition revenues, and other sources.

The final guidelines also suggested that FHEIs provide "fee concession" to students who are Indian citizens.

The guidelines also stated that the cross-border movement of funds and maintenance of foreign currency accounts, mode of payments, remittance, repatriation, and sale of proceeds, if any, shall be as per the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) 1999 and its Rules.

The application process for these universities will be online, and they will submit the required information on the UGC portal with their application. The universities willing to apply will also submit an undertaking stating that the quality of education imparted by it in its Indian campus is similar to that of the main campus in the country of origin, and qualifications awarded to the students in the Indian campus shall enjoy the same recognition and status as if they were conducted in its home jurisdiction.

"The Standing Committee shall assess each application on merit, including the credibility of the educational institutions, the programs to be offered, their potential to strengthen educational opportunities in India, and the proposed academic infrastructure, and make recommendations. The recommendations of the Standing Committee shall be placed before the Commission within 60 days from the date of receipt of the application, complete in all respects," the guidelines stated.

Earlier in the draft, the period to make recommendations before the UGC was within 45 days from the date of receipt of the application. It has now been extended to 60 days.

The Foreign Higher Educational Institution will have set up campuses in India within two years from the date of receiving the approval. Meanwhile, the final regulations do not mention the initial permission will be granted for how many years. On the contrary, the draft mentioned that "the permission shall be granted initially for ten years". The notification stated that the FHEIs shall not offer any such program of study which is contrary to the standards of higher education in India.

"The operation of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions shall not be contrary to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency, or morality," the draft norms had stated.

The commission will also keep a close watch on the operations of these universities and will have the right to inspect the campus and its operations at all times to ascertain the infrastructure, academic programs, and overall quality and suitability. In case of violation of norms, the commission can take action in terms of imposing a penalty, suspending, or withdrawing approval at any time.

Digital Education

Digital education is the same as digital learning, that is, learning that technology facilitates for students and gives them control over time, place, how to do it, and at their own pace. Years ago, it seemed that digital education was . only a part of the movies of the future, about things that were known to be impossible or that had no reason to exist.

But the reality is always greater than fiction and thanks to the Internet, because people can connect regardless of their location in the world, digital education opens up a wide range of teaching and learning opportunities, thus enabling a new era in the education of people of all ages: digital education is no longer a thing of the future.

Digital education allows students to take control of their learning without having to always be physically present in the classroom with a teacher in front of them. In addition, there are several factors that, along with goodwill, make digital education a reality and also beneficial for anyone with a little knowledge of new technologies to take advantage of it.

Time

Studying is no longer limited to a school day or an entire course ... the Internet helps any device with access to give students the ability to organize their time so that they can study at any time.

Place

Learning is no longer confined to four walls. Students can study anywhere they have a device with an internet connection, such as a library or their own home. Any place can be a good place to learn something new.

Methodology

Learning methodology in digital education has no boundaries. The interactive and adaptable software allows students to learn in their style, making learning personal and much more engaging. New learning technologies provide real-time data that gives teachers the information they need to modify instruction to meet the unique needs of each student.

Technology is essential to benefit from digital education. Facilitates content acquisition by students. As a rule, you need internet and hardware, a computer (laptop or desktop), or even a tablet or smartphone. But it is necessary to keep in mind that technology is a tool and it is important to use it wisely so that you can properly learn interesting content.

Digital content is the material that is taught and they are usually always of high quality and have nothing to envy to the physical content of books. In addition, most of the content that is not audiovisual can be printed to work on as PowerPoint, Word, or PDF content.

In addition to content and material, there must be willingness and good instruction from teachers through digital education. Teachers can be contacted via video calls, chat, or email. Technology is changing the role of the teacher, but even their online presence is important.

Digital education is no longer a thing of the future and it is coming closer and closer to people who have more access to information and learning. Thanks to the internet you can learn anything anytime, you just need to make proper use of these powerful tools to make the most of it.

Eliko Akobia
Educationist
Martvil - Georgia

I am Eliko Akobia, I am an English teacher. I teach in Oche and Thaler public school in Martvil Municipality. I am a very active, communicative, and result-oriented person. I am involved in various international and domestic educational organizations, I am an international speaker, moderator, and panelist. I have received the certificates of an internationally accredited speaker. My motto is "never stop learning".

NEET-PG 2024 on March 3, FMGE Dec. on Jan 20

■ EJ- *New Delhi*

The National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) will conduct the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test– postgraduate (NEET PG 2024) exam on March 3, 2024, and the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination (FMGE 2024) on January 20, 2024.

These dates were released in the tentative schedule released by NBEMS at the official website — natboard.edu.in.

As per the official schedule, the DNB/DrNB Final Practical Examinations – October 2023 will be conducted in January-February 2024. The Foreign Dental Screening Test (BDS) 2023 is likely scheduled on January 20, 2024.

In February, NEET-MDS 2024 will be conducted on February 9, and FET 2023 will be conducted on February 18.

The NBEMS Diploma Practical Examination – Dec 2023 exam is scheduled to be conducted in February or March 2024. In March, along with NEET PG, NBEMS will also conduct the Foreign Dental Screening Test (MDS Degree and PG Diploma) 2023. The FNB Exit Examination 2023 is also scheduled to be held in March or April.

India outperforms China with five times more schools: Niti Aayog

■ EJ- *New Delhi*

According to the recently released Niti Aayog report titled Learnings from Large-scale Transformation in School Education, India continues to have five times the number of schools than China for the same enrolment of students.

As per a recent report published by Reuters dozens of international and private schools in China are closing or merging because of tighter regulation, a slowing economy, and dwindling foreign student numbers.

The report further cited that in 2020 there were around 180,000 private education institutions nationwide which accounted for more than a third of all education institutions in China. These schools had 55.6 million students' enrollment.

However, international schools, which can only enroll students with foreign passports, have mostly seen student numbers decline due to expatriates from countries leaving after the pandemic and amid rising geopolitical tensions.

"A rapid expansion of schools before the Covid-19 pandemic drove a surge of privately run bilingual schools in China offering a Western exam curriculum. The business stumbled later as Beijing imposed new rules in 2021 and cracked down on the private tutoring business, aimed at easing pressure on children and lowering family costs," Reuters reported.

As per the Niti Aayog report, over 50 percent of primary schools across many states in India have an enrolment of less than 60. The cost of such sub-scale schools in the form of extensive multi-grade teaching, lack of a student and parent community that can demand accountability, poor infrastructure and the same 1-2 teachers also handling all administrative responsibilities in the absence of headmasters/ principals, etc is very high.

The report suggested school mergers as a solution to addressing the lack of enrollment in schools. As per the report, such a solution has been executed across SATH-E states and has given favorable results in filling up the enrolments in schools.

"There is often a perceived risk around the impact of mergers on access. However, third-party studies in SATH-E have also demonstrated that when executed rigorously the benefits of mergers are largely positive and can lead to improved learning outcomes," read the report.

Apart from mergers, the states can also develop a set of large schools with at least 10-20 percent spread across the state. These schools can be integrated K-12 schools and should provide transport so that all students can equitably "This has been recommended in the NEP too with the call to set up large school complexes. The report documents details of how school consolidation efforts were undertaken in all three Project SATH-E states and their learnings. The report also has information about the efforts to develop leadership schools.

DU offers 29 certificate courses without an entrance exam

■ EJ- *New Delhi*

The Campus of Open Learning (COL) at the University of Delhi is accepting applications for certificate courses that aim to enhance individual skills and knowledge across various industries and sectors. The duration of these courses ranges from three to 10 months, and there is no entrance test for admission. Interested candidates can register at col.du.ac.in.

Applicants must have completed Class 12, and those awaiting results from a qualifying exam are also eligible. The admission process is open year-round. Additionally, students currently pursuing degrees at Delhi University or other institutions can apply. This opportunity is extended to students from the School of Open Learning (SOL), Non-Collegiate Women's Education Board (NCWEB), regular colleges, or departments of DU.

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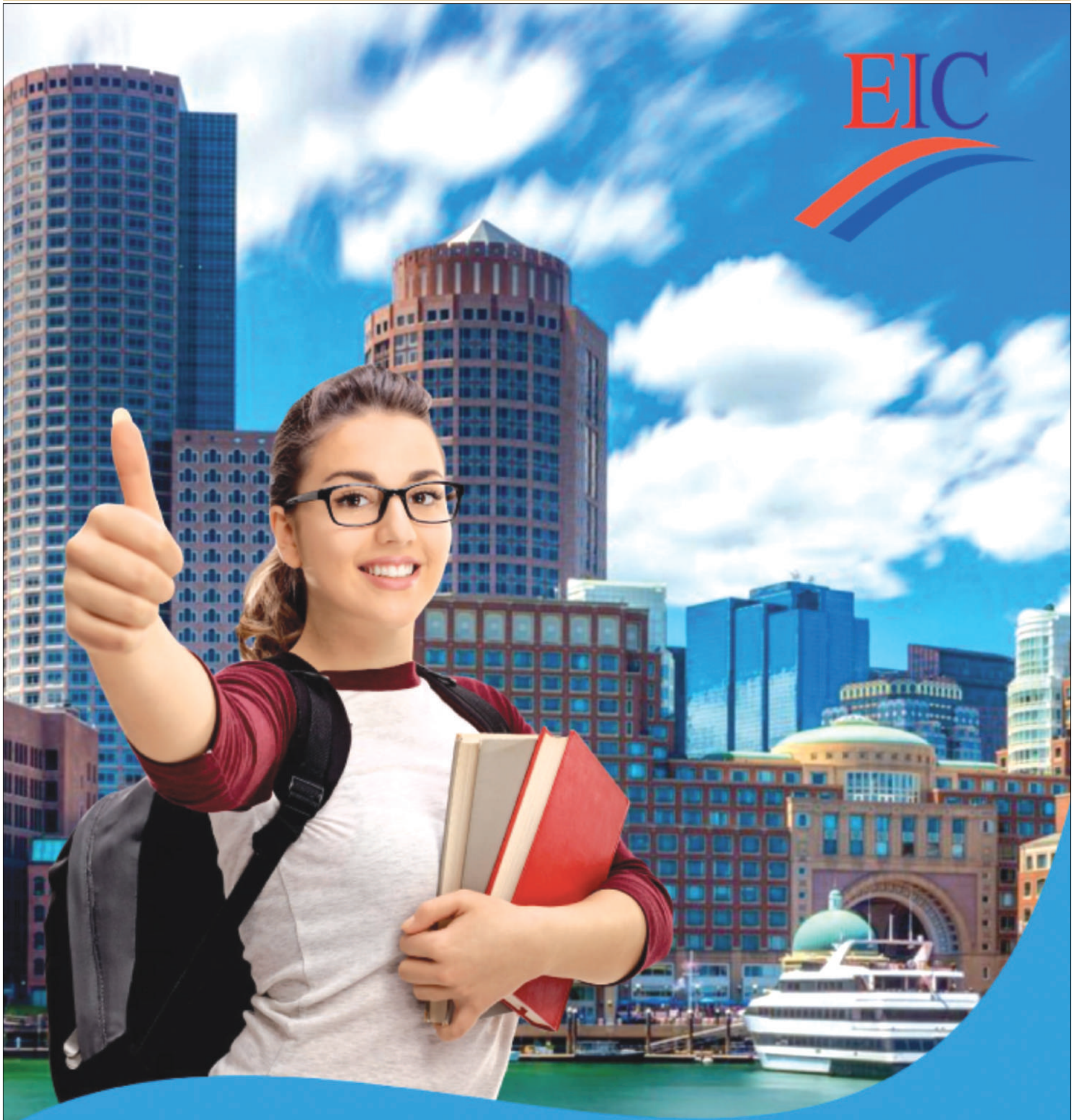
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