



International Column'



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## 'Literacy rate up from 74% to 80.9% in 13 years'



EJ News - New Delhi

India has recorded a steady rise in literacy, with the national rate climbing from 74 per cent in 2011 to 80.9 per cent in 2023-24, said Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday. Pradhan, speaking on International Literacy Day 2025, noted that while the figures mark progress, the ultimate goal remains ensuring literacy becomes a lived reality for every citizen.

"Literacy goes beyond reading and writing. It is a means to dignity, empowerment and self-reliance," Pradhan said during a virtual address. He underlined that the journey towards complete literacy must extend beyond statistics to genuine transformation in people's lives.

The government's flagship ULLAS-Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram, launched to accelerate adult learning, has seen more than three crore learners and 42 lakh volunteers join its fold. Pradhan highlighted that 1.83 crore learners have already taken foundational literacy and numeracy assessments, with 90 per cent clearing the test. "The programme now provides

material in 26 Indian languages, making learning accessible and inclusive," he added.

The minister praised Ladakh, Mizoram, Goa, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh for achieving full literacy. Ladakh became the first Union Territory to reach the milestone in June 2024, while Himachal Pradesh joined the list of states in 2025, alongside Tripura, Mizoram, and Goa. "These achievements reaffirm the power of collective effort by governments, communities and volunteers," Pradhan remarked.

This year's International Literacy Day was marked under the theme "Promoting Literacy in the Digital Era", spotlighting how technology is reshaping access to education and lifelong learning. Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary observed that digital literacy has become an integral part of India's broader literacy mission.

"India has set an example for the world, particularly the Global South, by creating robust digital public infrastructure that has accelerated education and inclusion. What could have taken fifty years has been realised in a decade through India's digital innovations," Chaudhary said.

According to the Constitution, a person is considered literate if they can read and write with understanding in any language. While this definition sets the

basic threshold, both ministers pointed out that literacy today encompasses functional, digital, and life-long learning skills.

Despite advances, global figures remain concerning. UNESCO's 2024 reports reveal that around 739 million adults and young people worldwide still lack basic literacy skills, showing the challenge is far from over.

India's progress is striking when viewed against its history. At the time of Independence in 1947, literacy stood at just 12 per cent. The 1951 Census recorded a modest rise to 18.33 per cent, with a sharp gender divide: 27.16 per cent of men were literate compared to only 8.86 per cent of women, a gap of more than 18 percentage points, according to the Press Information Bureau. The 2011 Census marked a turning point, reporting a national literacy rate of 74.04 per cent—82.14 per cent for men and 65.46 per cent for women. Kerala led the rankings with 93.91 per cent, followed closely by Lakshadweep (92.28 per cent) and Mizoram (91.58 per cent). Bihar, however, recorded the lowest literacy at 63.82 per cent, trailed closely by Arunachal Pradesh (66.95 per cent) and Rajasthan (67.06 per cent).

Fresh data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-24, reported by The Economic Times, shows India's literacy rate at 80.9 per cent for

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## Never Alone AI app launched by AIIMS Delhi to tackle student suicides

EJ News - New Delhi

AIIMS-Delhi has launched an Artificial Intelligence-based mental health and wellness programme to tackle suicidal tendencies among students and minimise the stigma surrounding it.

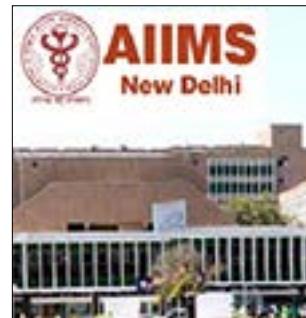
The "Never Alone" app, launched on World Suicide Prevention Day, focuses on screening, intervention and post-intervention follow-up for college and university students, said Dr Nand Kumar, a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at AIIMS-Delhi.

Besides the Delhi centre, the programme was also launched at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar and the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) in Shahdara.

"Never Alone" is a web-based, highly secured app that can be accessed round the clock via WhatsApp, Dr Kumar said, adding that students will have virtual and offline access to consultations by mental health and wellness experts through it.

The basic screening for mental health issues on the "Never Alone" app is highly secured and personalised, and costs only 70 paisa per student per day, Dr Kumar explained.

To enable students to avail the facilities of this app, institutes will have to approach AIIMS-Delhi



and subscribe to the service.

AIIMS-Delhi will provide this service to all AIIMSEs without any financial implication through the Global Centre of Integrative Health (GCIH) — a not-for-profit initiative supported and mentored by noted AIIMS-Delhi alumnus Dr Deepak Chopra.

Dr Chopra is an eminent author and world-renowned pioneer in integrative health for personal transformation.

According to the World Health Organisation, suicide claims one life every 45 seconds. Approximately 73 per cent of these suicides occurred in low and middle-income countries. NCRB data shows 1,70,924 people died by suicide in 2022, the highest in over 56 years.

Dr Kumar underlined that student suicide is, unfortunately, a significant public health concern around the world, including India.

In 2022, young adults aged between 15 and 24 years accounted for 45 per cent of suicides in India. The rate of suicides among young adults in India is higher than the global average.

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## More Indian curriculum-based schools in the UAE in the offing: Union Education Ministry



EJ News - Agency

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan discussed the opening of more Indian curriculum-based schools in the UAE to meet the educational needs of the Indian diaspora with the Chairperson of the Department of Education and Knowledge, UAE, Sara Musallam. Such schools could also facilitate two-

way student exchanges right from the school level. An official release from the Education Ministry said Pradhan launched the first overseas Atal Incubation Centre at the Abu Dhabi campus of IIT Delhi. He has also launched the B.Tech and Ph.D programs in Chemical Engineering

and Energy & Sustainability at the institute.

Pradhan said the institute would evolve as a world-class institution and nurture global leaders in engineering, technology, energy, sustainability, AI and other futuristic areas.

"The AIC at IIT Delhi's Abu Dhabi unit will nurture joint startups and research-led ventures by both Indian and UAE innovators and also promote bilateral collaboration in deep tech, AI, clean energy, healthcare and other sectors of mutual importance. The AIC, providing world-class incubation facilities, will also act as a gateway to the Middle East markets for Indian start-ups and innovators," he said.

This institution served as a beacon of knowledge and research and a lighthouse of the India-UAE knowledge partnership, the release added.

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# Skill Education Growth: With AI and Without AI

## Introduction

**E**ducation in the twenty-first century is undergoing its most profound transformation in modern history. Rapid technological advances, globalization, and shifting labour markets are reshaping the way people learn, work, and live. Among the many responses to these changes, the growth of skill education has emerged as a global priority.

At its core, skill education emphasizes practical competencies, adaptability, and lifelong learning. It equips learners not only with knowledge but also with the ability to apply, innovate, and lead in complex environments. Yet the lens through which we understand skill education differs depending on context. In one perspective, skill education is deeply intertwined with Artificial Intelligence (AI), data, and automation, reflecting the urgency of preparing students for an AI-driven future. In another perspective, skill education stands as a broader educational revolution, valuable even without specific reference to AI, grounded in human development, global competition, and the universal need for creativity and resilience.

This article compares these two perspectives: skill education with AI and skill education without AI, showing how both are essential to understanding the educational transformations shaping our world.

## Skill Education Growth With AI

When viewed through the lens of Artificial Intelligence, skill education appears as a direct response to technological disruption. Automation is replacing routine jobs in manufacturing, administration, and services, while new roles are emerging in fields such as machine learning, robotics, data science, and AI ethics. According to global reports, hundreds of millions of workers may need to reskill by 2030. Education systems

are therefore under pressure to produce not only graduates with knowledge but also citizens prepared to adapt to an AI-driven economy.

AI itself accelerates the demand for new competencies. Technical abilities such as cod-

ing, data analysis, and computational thinking are now seen as basic literacies, on par with reading and mathematics. Students must learn how to interact with AI systems, design algorithms, and interpret data responsibly.

At the same time, soft skills become more crucial than ever, because while AI excels at pattern recognition, it cannot replicate human empathy, ethical judgment, or creativity. Skill education in the age of AI thus integrates both: technical mastery and human-centered competencies.

AI is not only a driver but also an enabler of skill education. Online platforms powered by AI provide personalized learning pathways, adapting lessons to each student's pace and ability. Virtual and augmented reality create immersive learning environments where complex skills can be practiced safely. Behind these innovations lie mathematical and statistical models that predict skill needs,

AI but to innovate with it, question it, and guide it ethically. Skill education with AI is about ensuring that students are not simply users of technology but shapers of its future.

### Skill Education Growth Without AI

Yet skill education also has a life beyond AI. Even if we imagine a world without intelligent machines, the need for skill-based learning would remain urgent. Globalization, demographic change, sustainability challenges, and evolving labour markets all demand an adaptable and skilled population. In this context, skill education is not about AI but about preparing individuals for the uncertainties of modern life.

The growth of skill education without AI focuses on human potential. Traditional education often prioritized memorization and standardization, producing workers for stable jobs. But today's world requires flexibility, problem-solving, and creativity. Skill education emphasizes competencies such as communication, teamwork, lead-

ership, and ethical reasoning, which are vital in every profession. Whether in healthcare, business, or the arts, these abilities enable individuals to thrive, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Drivers of skill education



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share the same foundation: the belief that education must move beyond static knowledge to focus on competencies, adaptability, and lifelong learning. Both recognize the value of technical knowledge combined with soft skills. Both see global examples of success and both acknowledge significant challenges, such as unequal access, teacher preparedness, and the need for inclusive policies.

The difference lies in emphasis. The AI-focused perspective frames skill education as a response to technological disruption, emphasizing coding, data literacy, statistical models, and human AI collaboration. It highlights how AI both demands and enables new forms of learning. The broader perspective situates skill education in a wider context of globalization, social development, and human potential, focusing on communication, creativity, collaboration, and ethical responsibility.

These perspectives are not contradictory but complementary. Together, they show that skill education is simultaneously a response to immediate technological disruption and a timeless investment in human capacity.

### Recommendations

Whether viewed with or without AI, several actions are essential to sustain the growth of skill edu-

cation. Skill development should be integrated from the earliest years of schooling, ensuring that problem-solving and creativity are cultivated alongside literacy and numeracy. Curricula must remain flexible and evidence-based, updated regularly to align with changing needs. Teachers must be supported through continuous professional development so they can guide students with confidence. Partnerships between education and industry should be strengthened to connect learning with real-world practice. Inclusivity must remain a priority to ensure that all learners, regardless of background, can benefit from opportunities. Finally, ethical awareness should be embedded into education, ensuring that skill development serves not only employability but also human dignity and social progress.

### Conclusion

The growth of skill education is one of the defining transformations of our century. With AI, it appears as a strategic response to automation, powered by data and predictive models, turning classrooms into launchpads for technological leadership. Without AI, it remains a profound educational revolution, centered on human potential, preparing individuals for life, work, and citizenship in a complex world.

Ultimately, these perspectives converge on a single truth: skill education is the foundation of the future. It equips individuals not only to survive change but to lead it. Whether that change comes from AI, globalization, or the timeless challenges of human society.

The future is uncertain, but one thing is clear: the growth of skill education, with or without AI, is the key to building a stronger, fairer, and more innovative world.

# Artificial Intelligence in the development of education

“Education is the foundation of every society. Artificial intelligence can be a bridge between tradition and the future – if we use it wisely.”

## Potentials and benefits

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers enormous opportunities for personalizing learning. Every child learns at a different speed and in a different way, and AI can adapt to that rhythm. Instead of unified tasks, each student can receive targeted exercises and activities.

An additional benefit is access to huge knowledge bases, which AI organizes and presents in an understandable way. For teachers, this means being freed from some of the administrative obligations and having more time for creative and educational work.

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work or for class, our product will improve your fluency and enhance the vocabulary, tone, and style of your writing.

## The role of the teacher

Although AI has great potential, it cannot replace the teacher.

Teaching is not just the transmis-

over this role.

## New ways of learning

AI enables interactive methods: Virtual experiments in natu-



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tion of facts – it is human communication, trust and emotion. The teacher is a model for values and behavior. AI can help, but not take

ral sciences, “traveling into the past” through virtual reality in history, smart applications for language learning. With such



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tools, knowledge becomes vivid, practical and exciting.

## Challenges and risks

New technologies always bring new questions:

Technology addiction - the danger that students will lose the habit of independent thinking.

Privacy and ethics - AI works with large amounts of personal data.

Digital divide - not all schools have equal access to technology, which can create inequality.

## The role of the community

For the successful introduction of AI in schools, the following are needed: strategies and support from state institutions, training for teachers, investments in infrastructure, ethical guidelines and clear rules.

### My personal view

I see AI as a great opportunity for education, but also as a serious challenge.

- Opportunity - because it can make teaching more interesting and more effective.

- Challenge – because we must be careful not to lose the human factor.

My vision is a school where the teacher and AI work side by side: the teacher as a mentor, and AI as a support.

### Conclusion

AI is here and will inevitably become part of education. Instead of fear, wise acceptance and proper use are needed.

“Artificial intelligence is not an end, but a means. The human remains at the center of education.”

# CM Yogi orders probe into recognition, admissions of all UP Universities and Colleges



EJ - Lucknow .....

The Uttar Pradesh government, on Monday, ordered a comprehensive investigation into the recognition and admission processes of all courses offered by universities – both private and state – de-

gree colleges, and educational institutions across the state.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took the decision to this effect in a meeting with the officials concerned.

Following the CM's order, the

special probe teams would conduct ground-level inspections to verify the authenticity of the recognition and admission processes in the institutions.

In order to ensure transparency, the investigation will require every institution to submit an affidavit declaring that it is running only those courses duly recognised by the relevant regulatory authority, university, or board.

Additionally, institutions will be asked to provide a complete list of courses being conducted along with their recognition certificates.

The Chief Minister emphasised that no student should be enrolled in any unrecognized programme. Any institution, found running unrecognized courses and indulging in illegal admissions, will draw strict punitive action.

## IIM Ahmedabad Dubai campus inaugurated, set to expand education and research ties



EJ News - Dubai .....

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad has launched its first-ever international campus at Dubai International Academic City. The inauguration ceremony took place in the presence of Mohammed bin Rashid

Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, along with the Union Education Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan as well as India's Ambassador to the UAE Sunjay Sudhir as well as other IIMA officials.

According to an official statement, the Dubai campus was

established with the joint vision of the leadership of India and Dubai. The initiative is aligned with Dubai's Education 33 Strategy, which seeks to position the city among the top 10 global student destinations by 2033.

Speaking at the inauguration, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that the new campus reflects the ethos of "Indian in spirit, global in outlook" and represents a significant step in India-UAE knowledge collaboration.

The Dubai campus has introduced a one-year full-time MBA programme for global professionals and entrepreneurs. The programme, structured across five terms, is designed to provide

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# Maha Mock Test: MCOA announces statewide exam for MHT-CET, JEE aspirants

president Prajesh Trotsky said.

The event was attended by Sandeep Jha, chairman of Sandeep Group of Institutes, as chief guest and guests of honour included Shreyaa Daya, co-founder and CEO of OLL and the youngest entrepreneur featured on Shark Tank India, and Mangesh Nayak, retired sub-inspector and Mumbai attack hero credited with capturing terrorist Ajmal Kasab.

During the event, the association announced the formation of FORCE (Forum of Registered Coaching Educators), a coalition of eight coaching organisations that will jointly advocate policy matters such as the proposed Coaching Class Regulation Bill and GST reforms.

It also announced a collaboration with CBS Foundation to introduce group insurance schemes for teachers, aptitude testing for students, and career guidance programmes.

MCOA is a non-profit organisation representing coaching class owners in Maharashtra, and aims to advocate policy reforms, promote innovation in education, and protect the interests of coaching professionals.



EJ - New Delhi .....

The Maharashtra Class Owners' Association (MCOA) announced the launch of the 'Maha Mock Test', described as the country's first state-wide mock examination initiative for the aspirants of MHT-CET and JEE.

The initiative, led by Klasiv Innovations in association with MCOA and presented by CBS with Prometric as the technology partner, aims to provide students across Maharashtra with a simulated exam environment mirroring national-level testing conditions, a statement stated. The programme also offers remedial insights and remote follow-ups, according to an MCOA release.

Launched during the association's Teachers' Day celebrations and awards ceremony here, the registration for the test will remain open until Children's Day on November 14. The timeline has been designed to support students in their preparation for the JEE exams scheduled in January and April, and the MHT-CET in May, it read.

This initiative is about empowering students and transforming the learning process. For the first time, over 5,000 coaching classes are coming together to provide world-class testing standards, ensuring equal opportunities for students from Mumbai, Nagpur, and Nandurbar alike," MCOA

## Second Bimtech student dies after hostel shooting

EJ News - Gr. Noida .....

A tragic incident at the Birla Institute of Management Technology (Bimtech) in Greater Noida's Knowledge Park has left students and parents in shock. Two students lost their lives in a shooting inside the RCI Vidya Vihar hostel on.

Police said the incident occurred around 11:30 am in the hostel room of Deepak, a resident of Chiklur, Andhra Pradesh. On hearing gun shots, staff rushed to the spot. As the door was locked from inside, the warden broke a window to enter.



Inside, Deepak was found near a chair and his friend Devansh near the door, both critically injured.

Deepak died instantly, while Devansh, a first-year PGDM student from Agra, was taken to Kailash Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries on Wednesday morning. Post-mortems were conducted in Noida, after which Devansh's body was handed to his family in Agra and Deepak's remains taken to Andhra Pradesh.

The firearm used was a licensed revolver belonging to Devansh's father, a recently retired Deputy SP of Uttar Pradesh Police. Authorities have initiated the cancellation of the licence, though it remains unclear how Devansh's

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Indian Readers	Global Readers	Figures in Million's
Qtr. Ended Dec, 2024	Qtr. Ended March 2025	Groth %
5.39	5.64	+4.7%
3.26	3.71	+13.9%

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# ‘No benefits, no stability’: Canada study permit falls 62%; Indian families weigh costs, PR, & alternatives



■ EJ - Agency

Between June 2024 and June 2025, Canada saw a sharp decline in new arrivals of both workers and students. Study permits dropped from 11,287 to 4,185, marking a fall of 7,102 students, while work permits fell from 36,022 to 24,058, a decline of 11,964 workers.

This downward trend reflects growing challenges for both international students and temporary workers, hinting at stricter immigration policies and economic considerations.

Between January and June 2025, arrivals fell by 2,14,520 compared to the same period last year. As mentioned on the official website of IRCC, 88,617 fewer new students arrived between January and June 2025 compared to January to June 2024 in Canada.

On the other hand, 125,903 fewer new temporary workers arrived in the same period compared to January to June 2024. This decline highlights the “country’s ongoing efforts to maintain a balanced and sustainable immigration system,” as mentioned on its official website.

Part of this reset has meant stricter rules for international students. Ottawa doubled the financial eligibility requirement for study permits, increasing the proof of funds from CAD 10,000 to more than CAD 20,000.

It also imposed caps on study permits, introduced a verification process for acceptance letters, and promised tighter scrutiny of admission documents to combat fraud. For many middle-income families, particularly in India, the higher financial bar has created what one consultant calls a “psychological barrier”.

Ritika Gupta, CEO of AAera Consultants, said the sudden jump has been shocking. “For families in the middle-income range, this makes Canada feel less accessible. Many are second-guessing whether it is even worth the investment.”

The economic implications of Canada’s tightening stance are already visible. As per news agency Reuters, international students contribute an estimated \$16.4 billion annually to the economy, but colleges are now reporting falling revenues. Part-time jobs and gig work, once largely filled by international students, are harder to staff.

An experienced 41-year-old teacher from Delhi, based in Canada since 2019, described the current period as the worst she has experienced. Despite her permanent residency and professional background, she was laid off during pregnancy by a

prominent tech company that is into teachers’ training. Since then, she has struggled to secure full-time employment.

“International students brought more than just money — they also filled short-term teaching requirements. With fewer of them, both the tuition inflow and the workforce they provided have declined. Skilled teachers like me are now forced to take up temporary positions with no benefits or stability,” she said.

According to her, the school authorities are filling the 8-hour shift by assigning two teachers to four-hour part-time shifts, thereby avoiding the need to provide permanent teacher benefits.

Special needs education is also being hit as the supply of Educational Assistants shrinks. With budget cuts and staff shortages, many students with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, are left without adequate support. Teachers often find themselves lowering the overall level of instruction just so that struggling students can keep up. For many families, the promise of high-quality education in Canada feels increasingly out of reach.

Even those who have already invested years in Canada are finding themselves stuck in limbo. A flight instructor from India who came in 2019 recalls that when she began training, student pilots could become instructors and eventually transition into permanent residency. That path was effectively closed in 2023, when Ottawa discontinued the Transport category after just two draws.

“Now I have less than a year on my work permit, and I do not meet the Canada Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) score for a Canadian Experience Class (CEC) draw. I’m in a tough spot,” she said, summing up the uncertainty faced by many who planned their futures around opportunities that no longer exist.

However, despite the present scenario, some students trust the system. An Indian student in Canada, Sainee Shankar, pursuing a postgraduate degree in Global Business Management at Humber College, is not worried about placement.

“My course is under co-operative education, which allows international students to combine their academic studies with paid, career-related work terms for professional experience. This can help me secure full-time employment as well. Also, with different connections like professors and referrals, I can get a job,” she said.

Accommodation has been a major concern post-pandemic. Sainee recalls an incident where

her landlord misused a surveillance camera to harass tenants.

“When I came to Toronto from India, I was living in a flat, and the landlord would constantly monitor us through her camera — checking who was coming, who was going, and who was inside the flat. It raised serious privacy issues,” she said, adding that nothing could have been done except relocating, as the landlord consistently maintained that the check was important to keep the rented flat in good condition.

Students aspiring to study in Canada are now faced with difficult choices — taking larger loans, front-loading bank debts, or shifting to cheaper programmes such as two-year diplomas. Some are even looking beyond Canada altogether, weighing options in countries like Germany, Finland, or Ireland, where proof-of-funds requirements are lower and living costs are more manageable.

According to Aritra Ghosal, founder of OneStep Global, stretched provincial services and reduced certainty around permanent residency have further dented Canada’s appeal.

“Provinces like Prince Edward Island cut Provincial Nominee Program nominations by 25 per cent in 2024 to ease pressure, sending a signal that permanent residency pathways are less certain. Reputation also matters. When families weigh rising costs, uncertain residency outcomes, and negative global headlines, demand begins to soften even without policy tightening,” he said.

Ghosal noted that students now have three main strategies: restructuring finances by front-loading bank loans, showing larger family collateral which increases debt burdens and financial stress or considering programme switching.

“Programme switching allows students to shift to lower-fee institutions or two-year diplomas with less upfront cost. They can also look for destination diversification, exploring countries like Ireland, Finland, and Germany, where proof-of-funds requirements are lighter,” he added.

Industry observers say interest in Canada remains strong, but with a more cautious mindset.

Gupta pointed out that while Canada continues to attract students with quality education and strong Indian and Asian communities, families are asking harder questions: whether permanent residency will remain realistic, or if other destinations offer greater certainty.

“Traditional strongholds such as Punjab and Gujarat may still show strong interest in Canada, but more students now keep a ‘Plan B’ — whether in the UK, Australia, the Gulf, or emerging European destinations,” he observed.

“At the community level, there is growing anxiety among families who had traditionally viewed Canada as a clear pathway to education and long-term residency. With recent policy shifts, that sense of certainty has weakened, and the return on investment is being questioned more sharply,” he said.

## University of Strathclyde invites applications for scholarship in Science for Jan 2026 intake



### ■ EJ - Agency

The University of Strathclyde’s Faculty of Science in Glasgow has announced a scholarship for the January 2026 intake for science students. The scholarship— International Excellence Award for Postgraduate Taught Master’s Students—aims to support outstanding international students pursuing full-time, on-campus Master’s programmes within the Faculty of Science.

Valued at £7,000, the award will be applied toward tuition fees and is open to self-funded, non-EU applicants who hold an offer of admission for the January 2026 intake. With only ten scholarships available, selection will be highly competitive, based on academic excellence and relevant extracurricular or professional achievements.

The final deadline for scholarship consideration is December 12, 2025, with notifications issued within four weeks of application.

Applications are being considered on a rolling basis, encouraging early submission to maximize chances of success. Recipients must meet all eligibility criteria and adhere to deposit payment deadlines, which vary depending

on the month the scholarship offer is made.

### Eligibility

To be considered for a Faculty of Science International Excellence Award for Postgraduate Taught Masters Students – January 2026, candidates must

● Be a new, international (non-EU) fee-paying student holding an offer of admission for a full-time, Postgraduate Taught Master’s degree in the Faculty of Science for January 2026 entry.

● Be self-funded. Students who receive full scholarships, for example, from a government office or embassy, will not be eligible.

### Terms and conditions

● As a condition of the scholarship, successful applicants must make their deposit payment by the relevant deadline date below. The Faculty reserves the right to withdraw the scholarship offer if the deposit payment deadline is not met.

● If the scholarship offer was made in September 2025 or October 2025, awardees are required to make the deposit payment by 14 November 2025.

● If the scholarship offer was made in November 2025, awardees are required to make the deposit payment by 14 December 2025.

dees are required to make the deposit payment by 14 December 2025.

● If the scholarship offer was made in December 2025, awardees are required to make the deposit payment within 14 days.

● In addition to academic commitments, awardees will be expected to participate in student ambassador activities throughout their studies.

For full details and application guidance, prospective students can visit the University of Strathclyde’s official scholarship page or strath.ac.uk/studywithus/scholarships/facultyofscienceinternationalexcellenceawardforpgtmastersstudentsjanuary2026#apply.

### Literacy rate...

those aged seven and above. Yet, disparities persist: urban literacy is 88.9 per cent compared to 77.5 per cent in rural regions. Gender differences are also evident, with 87.2 per cent literacy among men and 74.6 per cent among women. States such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan continue to lag, underlining that India’s literacy gains, though significant, remain uneven.

Experts believe the momentum reflected in the PLFS survey points to the possibility of bridging these divides with sustained interventions.

### Student suicides...

Between 18 and 30 years accounted for 35 per cent of all suicides, the biggest share. This was closely followed by those aged 30 to 45 years, who constituted 32 per cent of all suicides, he said.

“Public health approach to suicide prevention argues for a major change in the way we think about suicide and its prevention, including an increase in trained mental health professionals,” Dr Kumar said.

The link between suicide and mental disorders (in particular, depression and alcohol use disorders) and a previous suicide attempt is well established in high-income countries, he stated. However, many suicides happen impulsively in moments of crisis with a breakdown in the ability to deal with life stresses, such as financial problems, relationship disputes, or chronic pain and illness, he elaborated.

“It’s well established that 70 to 80 per cent of people suffering from mental health issues don’t seek treatment. One of the important reasons for the treatment gap is unawareness and stigma.

“This is reflected in frequent incidents of suicide in medical colleges where psychiatrists and psychologists are available,” Dr Kumar added.

### Never Alone...

advanced management education and international exposure. The first cohort comprises 35 students, of which 27 are male (77.14 percent) and 8 are female (22.86 percent). Students represent diverse sectors including banking, financial services and insurance, consulting, IT, manufacturing, and healthcare.

According to IIMA, the Dubai campus will also set up two centres of excellence in its first year—one focusing on case writing and development, and the other on start-up incubation. Additional programmes are expected to be introduced in the coming years as the campus expands.

Last year around the same time, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi inaugurated its first international campus in Abu Dhabi on September 3. The campus offers programs in energy engineering and computer science, aligning with regional needs and global sustainability goal.

The inaugural batch included 52 students enrolled in BTech programs in Computer Science and Engineering and Energy Engineering.

Alongside the inauguration of IIM-A’s first international campus, on September 10, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the Atal Incubation Centre at the campus and launched PhD and BTech programs in Chemical Engineering and Energy and Sustainability.

### More Indian...

Later in the evening, he graced the first anniversary of the Dubai campus of Symbiosis University, which marked one year of successful operation in the UAE.

During a guided tour, he interacted with students in the classroom and also at various laboratories.

### Global ELT...

ability of local ELT options in countries like Malaysia and the Philippines, along with rising competition from in-country providers, is reshaping student preferences toward more cost-effective and accessible destinations.”

### Bimtech student...

brought the weapon into the hostel. Investigators suspect Deepak may have shot himself, as his position suggested he was seated with the revolver to his temple. No signs of a struggle were found, but the exact sequence of events is still under investigation.

Police also revealed that Deepak had previously attempted suicide twice and had a strained relationship with his parents, though he was academically bright. Devansh, meanwhile, had recently attempted the Air Force Common Admission Test but narrowly missed qualifying. The two were known to be close, often spending time together despite having separate roommates.

Security has since been tightened at the hostel and college. The administration expressed deep grief over the loss and announced counselling sessions for students to help them cope with the tragedy.

# Harvard wins legal battle over Trump administration

**EJ - Agency**

A federal judge gave Harvard University a win in its legal battle against the Trump administration, ruling with the Ivy League school in its attempt to restore nearly \$3 billion in federal funding for research frozen by the White House.

The decision from U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs in Boston on Sept. 3 rejected the administration's argument that it was targeting the university funds because of allegations of antisemitism on Harvard's campus.

The judge wrote in her 84-page ruling that it was "difficult to conclude anything other than that defendants used antisemitism as a smokescreen for a targeted, ideologically-motivated assault on this country's premier universities."

The decision is a major victory for Harvard, the only university to take the White House to court. The Trump administration has argued its legal fights with several universities are over campus antisemitism, but Harvard sees a bigger battle regarding its overall academic freedom and federal

spending.

"We must fight against antisemitism, but we equally need to protect our rights, including our right to free speech, and neither goal should nor needs to be sacrificed on the altar of the other," Burroughs said.

"Harvard is currently, even if belatedly, taking steps it needs to take to combat antisemitism and seems willing to do even more if need be."

A student leans out a window of Massachusetts Hall, April 25, 2001, to speak to a police officer at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA. One week ago roughly fifty students took over the hall, where the president has an office, to protest what they say in an unfair wage being paid to some University employees.

The judge added: "Now it is the job of the courts to similarly step up, to act to safeguard academic freedom and freedom of speech as required by the Constitution, and to ensure that important research is not improperly subjected to arbitrary and procedurally infirm grant terminations, even if doing so risks the wrath of a government committed to its agenda no matter the cost."

"We will immediately move to appeal this egregious decision, and we are confident we will ultimately prevail in our efforts to hold Harvard accountable."

## US visa applicants required to interview in home country

**EJ - Keisha Thorpe**

Effective as of September 6, all non-immigrant U.S. visa applicants, including international students, must schedule interviews at their local US embassy or consulate, or face an increased risk of rejection, the State Department has announced.

"Applicants who scheduled nonimmigrant interviews at a US embassy or consulate outside of their country of nationality or residence might find that it will be more difficult to qualify for the visa," the department warned.

Fees paid for such applications will not be refunded and cannot be transferred, said the department, adding that applicants would have to demonstrate residence in the country where they are applying.

The directive puts an end to a pandemic-era practice of students bypassing long wait times at home by scheduling visa ap-

pointments from a third country.

Stakeholders have raised concerns that the new rule could exacerbate wait times and disadvantage students whose local embassies are plagued by delays.

According to State Department data updated last month, individuals applying for student and exchange visitor visas at the US embassy in Abuja, Nigeria, currently must wait 14-months before obtaining an interview.

Meanwhile, the next available F, M, and J visa appointments at consulates in Accra, Ghana and Karachi, Pakistan, are not for another 11 and 10.5 months respectively.

A State Department spokesperson told The PIE that the scheduling of visa appointments was "dynamic". "Each embassy or consulate's capacity reflects the time required for consular officers to adjudicate the cases before them in full compliance with US law, including to ensure applicants do not pose a security or safety risk to

the United States," they added.

The new rule comes after a near month-long pause on new student visa interviews this summer saw major delays and cancelled appointments at embassies across the globe, preventing some international students from enrolling at US colleges this semester.

Enhanced social media vetting for all student visa applications is also believed to be contributing to the delays.

Existing nonimmigrant visa appointments "will generally not be cancelled," said the department, adding that: "Rare exceptions may also be made for humanitarian or medical emergencies or foreign policy reasons."

A spokesperson for the department told The PIE that the update was another way the government was implementing Trump's Executive Order: "protecting the United States from foreign terrorists and other national security and public safety threats," by conducting "maximum screening and vetting of all visa applicants."

"When visa applicants apply in their country of residence or nationality, interviewing officers with localized expertise and knowledge can appropriately evaluate their qualifications," they added.

Nationals of countries where the US is not conducting routine visa operations have been instructed to apply at the following designated alternatives:

# Global ELT recovery stalls across major study destinations

**EJ - Agency**

According to the third edition of BONARD Education's Global ELT Annual Report 2025, recovery has stalled in most major destinations, with the global ELT sector in 2024 reaching 73% of 2019 student volumes and 75% of student weeks, a slower progress than in 2023.

The report highlighted that, despite early optimism for 2024, stricter immigration policies in major destinations such as the UK, Canada, and Australia, combined with currency depreciation and inflation, slowed the sector's recovery.

"Between 2023 and 2024, the combined pressures resulted in a 10% decline in student weeks and a 6% decrease in student numbers across the eight major destinations," read the BONARD report.

"Between 2023 and 2024, the combined pressures resulted in a 10% decline in student weeks and a 6% decrease in student numbers across the eight major destinations," read the BONARD report.

Ireland was the only destination to surpass pre-pandemic levels in both student numbers (109%) and student weeks (107%), while Malta exceeded 2019 student weeks despite shorter stays.

However, growth slowed in both countries in 2024, with early indicators suggesting a decline in student weeks in 2025.

"Ireland and Malta's visa-friendly policies and work opportunities have helped them attract students discouraged by stricter regula-

tions, high course fees, and other expenses in other destinations," stated Ivana Bartosik, international education director at BONARD.

"This welcoming approach has enabled them to remain more attractive than other ELT destinations, with Ireland even surpassing both the US and Canada in total student numbers."

Among other destinations, the US continued to lag, reaching only about 63% recovery in student numbers, with visa denials and competition limiting growth prospects, while in Canada, study permit caps and stricter financial requirements have further driven a downward trajectory in ELT student numbers.

Visa denials have emerged as the leading challenge for the US ELT sector, with 61% of programs citing them as the top industry concern, as reported.

The UK remained a significant ELT market, capturing 38% of global share, driven largely by strong junior enrolments, a trend also seen in Ireland and Malta, though the country continues to face steep declines.

In 2024, ELT student mobility was increasingly shaped by two dominant factors: high visa refusal rates and affordability constraints.

Meanwhile, Australia, despite leading in student weeks for the third year, experienced a significant reduction in 2024, with student weeks down 22% and student numbers falling 16%

amid high visa refusal rates and rising fees.

The decline comes as Australia's ELICOS sector warns that rising visa fees are "killing" the industry, with numerous institutes shutting down in recent months, a stark contrast for a sector that once aspired to be the global ELT learners "destination of choice".

Moreover, New Zealand posted 44% year-on-year growth but remains the slowest to recover, reaching only 47% of 2019 levels, while South Africa has achieved 95% recovery and is gaining momentum from emerging African markets, as per the report.

"In 2024, ELT student mobility was increasingly shaped by two dominant factors: high visa refusal rates and affordability constraints. In key destinations like Canada, Australia, and the UK, stricter visa policies and rising application fees created setbacks in the student journey," noted Sarah Verkinova, head of international education at BONARD.

"Consequently, alternative destinations gained popularity, and a minimum of 100,000 students enrolled in ELT courses in Dubai and the Philippines."

In terms of ELT source markets, Brazil surpassed Colombia to become the largest globally, despite a 14% drop in student weeks, with China recording the highest growth (+21%), though volumes remain below pre-pandemic levels.

Meanwhile, growth in Dubai and the Philippines, along with strong gains from emerging markets such as Nepal (+96%), the UAE (+107%), and Kazakhstan (+26%), highlights an ongoing diversification beyond traditional markets.

"2024 may serve as the new benchmark year for China, as further rapid growth is unlikely," stated Kristina Benedikova, an international education consultant at BONARD.

"The increasing availability of international education options is a positive trend, and the growth in emerging markets like the Philippines and Dubai is encouraging."



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