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Rural education
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CBSE counselling to tackle stress

Times News Network
With an aim to help students overcome exam related anxiety, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has kicked-off its annual pre-exam psychological counselling from February 1. It will continue till April 4, 2019. The programme is designed as part of the board's outreach programme, which caters to the heterogeneous students, parents and rural geographic network of schools. An IVRS facility on toll free number 1800118004 has also been started by the CBSE from this year. The students, parents and stakeholders can obtain pre-recorded useful information on tackling board exams which includes tips for better preparation, time and stress management. FAQs along with live tele-counselling services offered by the principals and trained counsellors from CBSE affiliated schools.

Additionally, the board has also uploaded a comprehensive audio-visual presentation titled 'Knowing Children Better' on its website. The viewers can access the tab 'Counselling' at www.cbse.nic.in. Online counselling will be available at counselling.cbse@gmail.com.

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABILITY
Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) has launched Centre for Sustainable Development to address global solutions through interdisciplinary research. It aims at developing a national and global network of leading experts and researchers on sustainability and undertake research on water, pollution, waste management, energy, natural resources and climate change. The Centre will research on sustainability and related challenges of high societal importance and promote cost-effective and sustainable solutions through its strong outreach and technology transfer programmes. It has been set up with endowment from a IIS based cardiologist and philanthropist Dr Kiran C Patel.

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The Indian School of Business (ISB) has outperformed all the B-schools in the country to rank at 24th in the recent Financial Times Global MBA Rankings of 2019 for its one-year Post-Graduate Programme in Management (PGP). PGP, says **Basundhara Srivastava**, dean, ISB, is a well-performing course that gives importance to past work-experience of the candidate and helps in enhancing the past profession. Presence of experienced professionals makes the classroom diverse and promotes peer-to-peer learning, he says. "Minimum work experience required is five years and every candidate brings with him a different perspective towards the management course, which helps in peer-to-peer learning. For the same reason, many schools in Europe are moving towards post-work based short

HOW TO IMPROVE RANKING IN JEE MAIN APRIL 2019

A well-conceived study plan and regular mock tests would help you streamline your preparation to progressive perfection, writes Ramesh Batilsh

With NTA's decision to conduct the JEE Main exams twice a year from 2019, many aspirants are at an added advantage. The first phase of the JEE Main 2019 concluded on January 12 and the students who are not sure of getting a better rank have a second chance to take exams in April (Apr 6-20). Registration for the April session will be starting from February 8 to March 7, 2019. The Common Rank List for JEE Main 2019 will be available in the first week of May after the declaration of results of the April exam. The better of the scores of candidates who have appeared in both

JEE Main January and April will be considered for the ranking purposes while the scores of the candidates who have appeared for just one exam will be used as it is. The common rank lists will be despatched All India and Category ranks of the candidates in addition to the details of the candidates and marks obtained. The JEE Main rank will be the basis for admissions to the IITs, IITs and Government-funded Technical Institutes (GFTIs). For those who missed out on the first attempt or wish to improve their ranking to qualify for JEE Advanced, here is a better chance. Attempting the first Man exam should be considered

as a mock test which clarifies the weak areas for detailed analysis and further preparations.

STRENGTHEN YOUR WEAKER SUBJECTS
Identify the chapters whose questions were difficult to solve. Consult teachers and faculty for clearing doubts. Allocate extra hours every week for the difficult subjects and doubt-clearing sessions. Discipline is the key to follow the time table. Keep one hour in a week for self-analysis and correction.

UTILISE THE GAP BETWEEN BOARD EXAMS
Board exams and the second attempt to JEE Main being closely scheduled, preparations for both need to be planned meticulously. However, the challenge remains about how to focus and go about it to emerge victorious in both the exams. There are certain sub-topics in various subjects which generally get more weightage in the boards because the questions are subjective types. There are also some topics which are included in JEE Main, but not part of the JEE Advanced exam and students tend to ignore them during their preparation. For example, in Physics, the chapters on Electronic Devices and

Communications Systems are part of JEE Main and the board exam, but not part of the JEE Advanced Exam. Students should carefully study these chapters along with the questions from the sample papers so that they can comfortably handle descriptive questions from these chapters.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS WITH CONCEPT CLARITY
Though a good number of problem-solving is essential, but one needs concept clarity to accelerate success as the exam may not have a fixed pattern. Though it is good to solve questions, focus more on making the concepts transparent.

Aspirants are however advised to give in their best shot as it finally the relative performance in the actual exam that will fetch you a good rank in JEE 2019.

'Flying Farmer' for crop survey



Times News Network

A group of university students have leveraged a drone-powered edtech technology to provide cost-effective solution to solve two major agricultural issues faced by farmers - pesticide treatment and weed detection. Named as 'Flying Farmer', the drone is a wireless, sensor device that can be used in mapping and survey of yields and biomass. It estimates the nutrient content of the soil to aid production growth and reduce crop damage. Each drone can fly for 25 minutes on a charge and the entire apparatus costs approximately Rs 10,000 - Rs 15,000. Pre-programmed drones can target specific farm areas and crops to deliver pesticides, avoiding wastage and over use of pesticides. Also, human weed detection is inefficient and prone to error, leading to lower produce. Drones, programmed with computer vision algorithms and infrared sensors can detect the exact position and nature of weeds and transmit information to the farmer for timely action. The field trials conducted led to an improvement of 15-20% in produce quantity.

Around 45 students and five faculty members from the Electronics, Mechanical and Agricultural Engineering department of Lovely Professional University (LPU) have been actively involved in the project that materialised at a cost of Rs 1.2 crore. The University will not file for a patent instead open source the technology so that it can be inexpensively used by farmers everywhere.

Tips to score better in the JEE Main 2019 (April Session)

TIPS	NOTE
Solve at least 50-60 numerical questions per day	All subjects - Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics.
Set time limits for each question	Improve your speed while solving problems
Start with the challenging areas first	Prepare brief notes on the hardest sections
Categorise your time table	Give proper time to those topics which you have missed in the first attempt of JEE Main (Jan 2019). Work on your weaker areas effectively and efficiently
Prioritise by topic	Develop your strategy to prioritise your subjects in accordance with your requirements
Analyse your mistakes and improve upon them	Find out the points that you often face difficulty with and which slow you down. Seek help from teachers on these points
Never quit until you have achieved your daily target	Once you have solved your daily problems, make tomorrow's plan
Practice logical thinking, analytical skills and increase your mental ability	Build your solutions step-by-step with conceptual thinking. Remove stray thoughts and increase your mental strength

What could PISA 2021 mean for India

Indian schools have a long way to go to improve India's ranking in 2021 participation in PISA

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Almost after a decade, India is set to participate in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that evaluates educational systems by measuring scholastic performance of 15-year-old students in Mathematics, Science and their reading abilities.

It was in 2009 that India took the assessment and was ranked second last among the 73 participating countries. "India's participation in PISA 2021 is an attempt towards developing basic education. The assessment will help us set global benchmarks for Indian institutions," says Manoj Kumar, joint secretary, MHRD.

Several factors will be taken in account in 2021, says **Andrew Schleicher**, director (PISA), OECD. "Not just India, but PISA has also evolved since 2009. There is now greater focus towards adapting the assessment to the educational, social and cultural context of countries," he adds.

IMPACT OF PISA 2021

In a world where 'Google knows everything', a shift towards competency-based education system becomes crucial. People are no longer rewarded on the basis of knowledge utilisation. It is hard to deliver competency-based education in classrooms, because it requires different ways of learning and teaching.



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"PISA will help India understand different ways of learning and substitute difficult educational reforms. We will find out if Indian schools are breaking the vicious cycle between disadvantage and poor educational outcomes," adds Schleicher.

However, just a month ago, ASER 2018 showcased negligible improvement in learning outcomes of class VII students and these students will go on to be a major part of PISA in 2021. With such condition of education system, it is difficult to anticipate India's score.

WHY EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES ARE AT THE TOP

As per the analysis, at least three PISA results, East Asian countries such as Singapore, China, Japan and South Korea have been dominating the rankings by being in the top 7, leaving behind countries such as the US, UK and Finland.

In Western countries, says Schleicher, students are often segregated into different tracks at early ages, reflecting the notion that only some children can achieve world-class standards, which is one of the reasons behind western countries not making it to the top of the list. "The first thing we learned is that the leaders in high-performing East Asian education systems have convinced their citizens that it is worth investing in the future through education, rather than spending for immediate rewards and it is better to compete on the price of labour rather than on the price of labour," he adds.

India could possibly adopt some of the best practices from these countries. "We are yet to initiate processes to understand guidelines of the assessment. We would invest resources and time to understand the practices of high-achieving East Asian countries," adds Garg.

Centre allocates Rs 93,847.64 cr to provide quality education for all

Budget announces Rs 37,461.01 crore for higher education, Rs 56,386.63 crore for school education

Times News Network

The Budget 2019 has put maximum emphasis on quality improvement programmes and has allocated funds to boost the setting up of new IITs, IITs and research. There has also been 245% increase in the allocation for quality improvement programmes in Technical Education (TEQIP-III). Budget allocations have also been increased for setting up new IITs and new Schools of Planning and Architecture. For research programmes such as IMPRESS, Rs 190 crore has been allotted marking an increase of 37% compared to the previous year.

The IITs have been allocated Rs 2,223 crore in the interim budget apart from projects valued at Rs 12,028 crore which have been sanctioned from Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA). More projects under HEFA will be announced in the coming year. The Central Universities have been provided Rs 6,484 crore while UGC has been allocated Rs 4900 crore. In order to improve the skill levels among students, allocation for skill-centric pro-

grammes has been raised from Rs 40 crore to Rs 125 crore.

Overall, the HRD ministry received a budget allocation of Rs 93,847.64 crore in order to provide quality education for all in the interim Budget 2019 which is more than Rs 10,000 crore from the previous year's budget allocation. The government has increased budget allocation to the higher education sector by Rs 2,450 crore and has also made available more than Rs 17,000 crore using the HEFA funding mechanism. Total fund availability for the higher education sector for 2019-20 would be Rs 69,193.68 crore in 2019-20 which is almost double as compared to last year.

The government has also provided an additional equity of Rs 2,100 crore to HEFA to help mobilise funds for building superior infrastructure in higher educational institutions. An increase of 70% has been allocated for the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, under which 10,000 villages have been adopted by the higher educational institutions.



Short term post-experience business courses enhance peer-to-peer learning

Besides being ranked at third position in FT Rankings, ISB boasts of 34% women students' intake and 187% hike in salaries

term courses as the candidates have already received a lot of learning. Also, during admission we look at the communication skills of the candidate, leadership qualities and understand social responsibility," he says. The institute has global accreditations from Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and EQUIS Quality Improvement System (EQUIS). Talking about recognition from Indian bodies such as the AICTE, the dean says that the body only recognises a master's course if its duration is two years. However, because

the candidates come after a lot of their respective industry exposure, a year is sufficient to provide them with all the coursework. Several reputed international institutes offer very successful one-year management programmes. Candidates with hands-on industry exposure can become better managers. However, integrated management programmes like five-year Integrated Programme in Management (IPM) offered by IIM Indore, can serve the purpose if a lot of experiential learning is included, says Srivastava. The institute now plans

to focus on enhancing multidisciplinary research and increase foreign student enrolment to further improve the rankings year-on-year. "Investing in research is important for institutes to become Institutions of Eminence in real sense. More than 90% of our faculty members hold PhD degrees from

abroad and thus, bring with them global exposure and best teaching practices. We already have a quality student-teacher ratio and are trying to make faculty chairs that are diverse and international," says Srivastava. As all disciplines are being transformed in the backdrop of the digital revolution and information systems, thus, the institute will focus on faculty that is not conversant in data

analytics, fintech, IT and other relevant skills. "We already have 10 research centres across our two campuses in Hyderabad and Mohali that focus on different areas including social science or healthcare, public policy, etc. We need to ramp up international student enrolment which presently stands at 3% in our Post Graduate Programme (PGP). This is because international Post Graduate Programme in Management (PGPM) takes the highest spot amongst IITs in the FT Global MBA Ranking 2019. IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Calcutta have been ranked at 47 and 49 respectively.



Basundhara Srivastava

With 'Study in India' campaign gaining traction and IIMs rankings going up, there will be greater interest among international students looking at India for business management education

