

'Rip-off' degrees

UK reforms **likely** to benefit Indian students

THE UK is **seeking** to **effect** reforms in its higher education system, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announcing a **crackdown** on the institutes that are **mere** 'teaching shops' offering 'rip-off' degrees. The **students** of these institutes **have** failed to find **decent** employment and are thus **burdened** with **hefty** education loans. Though the move is being **criticised** by Sunak's opponents, it is **likely** to benefit Indian students — who have been **flocking** to the UK in the hope of getting world-class education from its leading universities and improving their career **prospects** — in terms of clarity about the value of the courses **on offer**. **Notably**, as per the 2020-21 data Indians are the second largest **cohort** of international students in the country after the Chinese.

Sunak's **argument** in support of his aim to protect **prospective** students from being sold false dreams **should** be **weighed in** by all **stakeholders**. He has **backed** it with some eye-opening statistics: around 30 per cent of the graduates fail to 'progress into highly skilled jobs or further study 15 months after graduation'. A careful **perusal** of Britain's ranking of colleges as it **sifts** the **mediocre** and below-average ones from the good institutes **should** be a **must** for those **aspiring** to study in the UK.



This situation also assumes **significance in the light of** a recent social media post by an Indian student in the UK going viral. As she **vented** her frustration over her inability to find a proper job after graduation, it found **resonance** among many global graduates and postgraduates as they shared their **heart-rending** experiences. This is the harsh reality. Whether a course is **viable** enough to translate into **worthwhile** work opportunities should be the basis of choosing a college abroad. [\[Practice Exercise\]](#)

- **On offer** (phrase) – available.
- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

Vocabulary

1. **Rip-off** (noun) – a fraud or swindle, especially something that is grossly overpriced. छल, ठग
2. **Likely** (adjective) – Probable, Possible, Expected, Presumed, Anticipated. संभावित
3. **Seek** (verb) – try, attempt, endeavour, aim कोशिश करना
4. **Effect** (verb) – Execute, Implement, Bring about. लागू करना
5. **Crackdown** (noun) – Clampdown, Suppression, Repression, Punitive action. कड़ा कार्रवाई करना
6. **Mere** (adjective) – Pure, Simple, Sheer, Bare, Plain. केवल
7. **Decent** (adjective) – of an acceptable standard; satisfactory. उदार, सहनीय
8. **Burden** (verb) – Weigh down, Overload, Encumber, Strain, Oppress. के बोझ से दबे हुए हैं
9. **Hefty** (adjective) – Bulky, Large, Substantial, Massive, Weighty. भारी
10. **Criticise** (verb) – Denounce, Condemn, Disapprove, Reprimand, Chastise. आलोचना करना
11. **Flock** (verb) – Gather, Congregate, Assemble, Rally, Group together. जमा होना
12. **Prospect** (noun) – Outlook, Perspective, Possibility, Forecast, Prediction. संभावना
13. **Notably** (adverb) – Particularly, Especially, Mainly, Mostly, Primarily. विशेष रूप से
14. **Cohort** (noun) – Group, Contingent, Company, Battalion, Brigade. समूह
15. **Argument** (noun) – Debate, Discussion, Disputation, Contention, Claim. तर्क
16. **Prospective** (adjective) – Potential, Likely, Prospective, Possible, Expected. संभावित
17. **Weigh in** (phrasal verb) – to give an opinion or enter a discussion or argument विचार करना
18. **Stakeholder** (noun) – Investor, Shareholder, Contributor, Party involved, Participant. हितधारक
19. **Back** (verb) – Support, Endorse, Advocate, Stand by, Champion. समर्थन करना
20. **Perusal** (noun) – Examination, Study, Scrutiny, Inspection, Review. समीक्षा
21. **Sift** (verb) – to make a close examination of something छान-बीन करना
22. **Mediocre** (adjective) – not very good
23. **Must** (noun) – Requirement, Necessity, Need, Obligation, Duty. आवश्यकता

24. **Aspire** (verb) – Desire, Wish, Hope, Yearn,
Aim. इच्छा करना
25. **Significance** (noun) – Importance,
Relevance, Meaning, Value, Essence. महत्व
26. **In the light of** (phrase) – Considering,
Given, Because of, In view of. देखते हुए
27. **Vent** (verb) – Express, Utter, Voice, State,
Air. प्रकट करना
28. **Resonance** (noun) – Reverberation, Echo,
Resound, Vibration, Ringing. गूँज
29. **Heart-rending** (adjective) – causing great
sympathy or sadness मर्मभेदी, शोकजनक
30. **Viable** (adjective) – Feasible, practical,
workable, realistic, achievable. व्यवहार्य
31. **Worthwhile** (adjective) – Valuable, Useful,
Productive, Beneficial, Rewarding. लाभकारी

Summary of the Editorial

1. The UK is introducing reforms to its higher education system.
2. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak aims to clamp down on 'teaching shops' offering substandard degrees.
3. Many students from such institutes struggle to find good employment.
4. They often end up with large education loans due to these 'rip-off' degrees.
5. The reform has faced criticism from Sunak's political opponents.
6. Indian students, who seek world-class education in the UK, are likely to benefit from this move.
7. In the academic year 2020-21, Indians were the second largest group of international students in the UK, after the Chinese.
8. Sunak's objective is to protect students from false educational promises.
9. He provided a statistic: about 30% of graduates don't find highly skilled jobs or pursue further studies within 15 months of graduating.
10. Aspirants should review the UK's college rankings to distinguish good institutes from mediocre ones.
11. An Indian student's recent social media post about her challenges in finding a job in the UK went viral.
12. Her story resonated with many global graduates who faced similar challenges.
13. Many shared their disappointing experiences after studying abroad.
14. Students must evaluate if a course provides real-world job opportunities before choosing it.
15. The viability of translating a degree into job opportunities should be a priority when selecting an overseas college.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **Based on the passage, which of the following statements most accurately reflects the UK's higher education reforms?** [Editorial page]
 - A. The UK's reforms primarily target benefiting Indian students.
 - B. The UK's higher education system has been universally praised.
 - C. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's reforms aim to target institutes that provide students with low employment prospects and leave them with significant debts.
 - D. Chinese students are not as numerous as Indian students in the UK.
2. **Based on the passage, which of the following best represents the primary concern raised by Sunak regarding prospective students studying in UK colleges?**
 - A. The recent decrease in the number of colleges in the UK.
 - B. The influence of social media on student choices for UK colleges.
 - C. The potential for students to be misled about post-graduation opportunities.
 - D. The focus on rankings by prospective students when choosing a college.
3. **What tone does the passage predominantly display regarding UK's educational reforms?**
 - A. Enthusiastic
 - B. Critical
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Concerned
4. **What is the main theme of the passage?**
 - A. The popularity of UK universities among Indian students.
 - B. The challenges faced by international students in finding jobs in the UK.
 - C. The proposed reforms in the UK higher education system and its implications for international students.
 - D. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's political strategies.
5. **Which idiom best fits the situation described in the passage about certain institutes in the UK offering subpar education?**
 - A. Beat around the bush
 - B. Jump on the bandwagon
 - C. Sell someone down the river
 - D. Bite off more than one can chew
6. **Select the correct homonym from the given options to fill in the blank.**

He could not _____ the weight of the heavy boxes.

 - A. bare
 - B. bear
 - C. bier
 - D. bair
7. **The following sentence has been divided into parts. One of them may contain an error. Select the part that contains the error from the given options. If you don't find any error, mark 'No error' as your answer**

The investors were / put off by the dirty / visage of the workshop

- A. visage of the workshop
B. No error
C. put off by the dirty
D. The investors were
8. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank.**
She took umbrage at his _____ remarks.
A. innocuous
B. laudatory
C. puerile
D. derogatory
9. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
P. YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, for which they get paid in cash or kind by advertisers.
Q. In a welcome move aimed at protecting the consumers' interest in this digital age, the government has prescribed guidelines for social media influencers, including celebrities and virtual avatars, for endorsing content on platforms such as
R. Penalties for violations include fines and a jail sentence.
S. In an attempt to bring transparency in the deals to minimise unfair trade practices and misleading promotions, the influencers are now required to prominently spell out in their content, whether audio, visual or live-streamed, the material gains that they receive for backing brands, products, services or experiences.
A. SRQP B.QPSR C.QSPR D.SPRQ
10. Select the most appropriate **ANTONYM** of the underlined word.
The mother patiently waited for her child to finish speaking before offering her opinion.
A. Impetuously
B. Cordially
C. Diligently
D. Punctually
11. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
P. Technology titans such as Google and Facebook have been hugely successful in monetising the eyeballs they attract and in generating advertising revenue.
Q. Australia, Canada, France and the European Union have taken initiatives to ensure a fair division of revenue between the creators of news content and the aggregators.
R. The anomaly is that they use content generated and paid for by news media businesses, eating into their revenues that would otherwise be used to fund quality journalism. Course correction is imperative for the future of the news business.
S. The Centre's message to Big Tech content aggregators to give a fair share of revenues to digital platforms of print news publishers is in line with the global trend to reset an imbalance that has had a devastating impact on journalism.
A. PSQR B.PSRQ C.SQPR D.PRQS
12. Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words.
The ability to understand and share the feelings of another

- A. Anecdote
- B. Parlay
- C. Empathy
- D. Glib

13. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**

- P. However, India's exports, according to data released by the Chinese customs, fell from \$28.1 billion to \$17.48 billion.
 - Q. The trade deficit has crossed \$100 billion for the first time, reaching \$101.02 billion from \$69.4 billion in 2021.
 - R. The bilateral trade with China reached a record \$135.98 billion in 2022, driven by surging Indian imports, which went up by 21 per cent from \$97.5 billion in the previous year to \$118.5 billion.
 - S. Trade last year surpassed the record figures in 2021, which was attributed to a recovery in demand in India and increasing imports of intermediate goods as well as medical supplies.
- A. RPQS B.RSPQ C.SRQP D.SPRQ

14. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank.**

The artist's use of color is _____.

- A. ephemeral
- B. austere
- C. abstruse
- D. effusive

15. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**

- P. For the huge Punjabi diaspora and international travellers from the region, any prospect of avoiding the cumbersome journey from and to the IGI Airport in New Delhi comes as a huge relief.
 - Q. While direct or IGIA-linked flights from various global destinations to Chandigarh continue to be a pipe dream, any such development concerning Amritsar brightens the eyes.
 - R. The private carrier will also launch five additional services to Heathrow from Delhi and Mumbai. Air India already has a direct flight from Amritsar to Birmingham.
 - S. Air India has announced a thrice-a-week direct flight beginning March-end from Amritsar to Gatwick in London, replacing the direct link to Heathrow airport that is operational at present.
- A. QSPR B.PSRQ C.QSRP D.PQSR

16. **Select the most appropriate meaning of the highlighted idiom.**

Take it with a grain of salt

- A. To season your food sparingly
- B. To swim in salty water
- C. To accept information or advice with skepticism
- D. To drink tequila shots

Comprehension

The increase in the number of extreme weather events in recent years seems to have led _____1_____ some change in the developed countries' attitude toward the global climate

financing architecture. But thoughts have rarely matched action. The summit for a “Global Financial Pact on Climate Change” at Paris, last week, too asked the right questions. French President Emmanuel Macron set the tone by calling for a “public finance shock”. Most other delegates agreed that multilateral institutions should find ways to unlock new climate investments and debt arrangements should include disaster clauses — a two-year pause on repayments after an extreme weather event, for example. Yet, representatives of the developing countries at the two-day summit could not help coming away with the feeling that changes in the funding ecosystem are likely to be _____2_____, at best, in the coming years. Amongst the positives of the meet was President Macron’s announcement that there is “a good likelihood” of the rich nations fulfilling, by the end of this year, ___3___pledge for an \$ 100 billion annual fund for climate change initiatives in the Global South. That commitment was made in 2009 and developing countries were _____4_____to receive the funds by 2020.

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

17. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 1.**

- A. In
- B. To
- C. For
- D. By

18. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2.**

- A. Reconsideration
- B. Incremental
- C. Disassemble
- D. Complement

19. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3.**

- A. Its
- B. It’s
- C. Their
- D. There

20. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4.**

- A. Slaton
- B. Slate
- C. Slated
- D. Slotted

Answers

1. C 2.C 3.D 4. C 5. C 6. B 7. B 8.D 9.B 10.A 11.C
 12. C 13.A 14.B 15.D 16.C 17.B 18.B 19.C 20.C

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

- C) Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's reforms aim to target institutes that provide students with low employment prospects and leave them with significant debts.**

The passage mentions that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced a crackdown on institutes that are mere 'teaching shops' offering 'rip-off' degrees, suggesting that these institutes fail to provide students with decent employment opportunities and saddle them with hefty education loans. This implies that the reform's primary goal is to ensure students get value for their education and are not burdened with loans for degrees that don't provide good employment opportunities. Options A, B, and D are either not directly supported by the passage or are contradicted by it.
- C) The potential for students to be misled about post-graduation opportunities.**

The passage highlights Sunak's argument that prospective students should be aware of the potential for being sold false dreams. This is supported by statistics showing that many graduates do not find highly skilled jobs or further study shortly after graduation. Furthermore, the experience of the Indian student and other global graduates emphasizes the reality of the situation and the importance of ensuring that chosen courses offer viable work opportunities post-graduation.
- D) Concerned**

The tone of the passage leans more towards a "concerned" approach. This is evident in the descriptions about 'teaching shops', the issues faced by students who are unable to find employment, and the mention of the social media post of the frustrated Indian student. The passage underscores the importance of reforms and the concerns regarding students being burdened with loans or not finding decent jobs.
- C) The proposed reforms in the UK higher education system and its implications for international students.**

The main theme of the passage revolves around the UK's efforts to reform its higher education system by eliminating 'teaching shops' and providing better clarity on the value of the courses. The passage highlights how these reforms might be beneficial for Indian students, who make up a significant portion of the international student body in the UK. The challenges faced by students, in terms of employment, further underscore the importance and need for these reforms.
- C) Sell someone down the river**

The idiom "sell someone down the river" means to betray or deceive someone. In the context of the editorial, some institutes in the UK have been misleading students by offering 'rip-off' degrees and not ensuring good employment opportunities after graduation. This is akin to selling students false dreams or betraying their trust.

- **Beat around the bush** (phrase) – Avoiding the main topic, not speaking directly or clearly. मुद्दे को टालना
 - **Jump on the bandwagon** (phrase) – To adopt a popular trend or activity. प्रचलित प्रवृत्ति में शामिल होना
 - **Sell someone down the river** (phrase) – To betray or deceive someone. किसी को धोखा देना
 - **Bite off more than one can chew** (phrase) – To take on a task or responsibility that is too large or difficult. ज्यादा जिम्मेदारी लेना जो संभाली ना जा सके
6. B) **Bear**
- A. **bare** – it means uncovered, naked, or without any clothing or covering अनावृत
 - B. **bear** – It means to carry or support, to endure or withstand सहना
 - C. **bier** – a movable frame or stand on which a coffin, a corpse, or both are placed before burial or during a funeral ceremony अर्थी
 - D. **bair** – No meaning Exists.
7. B) **No error**
- **Put off** (phrasal verb) – cause someone to lose interest or enthusiasm. के होश उड़ना, निराश करना
 - **Visage** (noun) – the manifestation, image, or aspect of something छवि
8. D) **Derogatory**
- A. **Innocuous** (adjective) – Harmless, inoffensive, benign, safe, mild अहानिकर
 - B. **Laudatory** (adjective) – Praiseworthy, commendatory, admiring, complimentary, approbatory सराहनापूर्ण
 - C. **Puerile** (adjective) – Childish, immature, infantile, juvenile, silly बालिश
 - D. **Derogatory** (adjective) – Disparaging, belittling, pejorative, deprecatory, demeaning अनादरपूर्ण
9. B) **QPSR**
- Q:** This sentence provides an introduction to the context of the passage, i.e., the government's decision to prescribe guidelines for social media influencers
- P:** The phrase "platforms such as" at the end of sentence Q directly connects to the list of platforms mentioned in sentence P. The pronoun "they" in sentence P also refers back to "social media influencers" in sentence Q, establishing the noun-pronoun relationship.
- S:** This sentence elaborates on the guidelines mentioned in sentence Q. The word "influencers" here acts as a reference to the "social media influencers" from sentence Q.
- R:** Sentence R naturally follows S, providing further details on the consequences of not following the guidelines.
10. A) **Impetuously**

- A. **Impetuously** (adverb) – Impulsively, rashly, hastily, unthinkingly, recklessly तेजी से
- B. **Cordially** (adverb) – Warmly, sincerely, genially, graciously, affably सौहार्दपूर्ण ढंग से
- C. **Diligently** (adverb) – Carefully, attentively, conscientiously, meticulously, assiduously ध्यान से
- D. **Punctually** (adverb) – Promptly, on time, timely, exactly, punctiliously समय पर

11. C) SQPR

S: The statement S introduces a message from "The Centre" to the "Big Tech content aggregators" about revenue sharing. It mentions a global trend and an imbalance affecting journalism.

Q: Statement Q provides specific examples of countries and unions that have taken initiatives, which would be a logical continuation after mentioning the global trend in statement S.

P: Statement P introduces specific "technology titans" and highlights their success. This sets the stage for statement R, which elaborates on the consequences of this success.

R: Statement R follows P nicely as it talks about the "anomaly" in how these technology titans (referred to by the pronoun "they") use the content. It provides an argument supporting the need for a "course correction."

12. C) **Empathy** – The ability to understand and share the feelings of another समानुभूति

- **Anecdote** – A short but amusing story किस्सा
- **Parlay** – Stake winnings from one bet on a subsequent wager बाज़ी
- **Glib** – Fluent and easy, often in an insincere or deceptive way वाक्पटु

13. A) RPQS

R: This sentence introduces the trade figures for 2022, setting the context for what happened that year.

P: The use of "However" indicates a contrasting point is coming up. In this case, while imports have surged (as mentioned in sentence R), the exports have declined, providing a contrast to the previously mentioned increase in imports.

Q: This sentence provides the result of the changes in imports and exports (mentioned in sentences R and P) for the year 2022 compared to 2021, leading to a significant trade deficit.

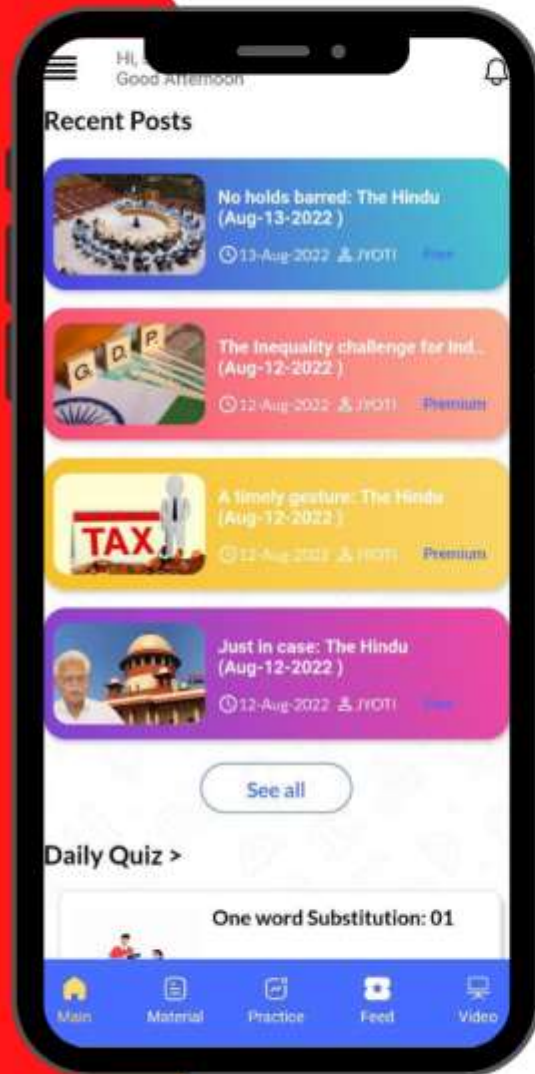
S: "Trade last year" is an explicit reference to the events of 2022 which have been discussed in the previous sentences. This sentence provides a reason for the increased trade figures, i.e., recovery in demand and increased imports.

14. B) **austere**

- A. **Ephemeral** (adjective) – Fleeting, transient, temporary, short-lived, evanescent क्षणिक
- B. **Austere** (adjective) – Plain, stark, somber, unadorned आडंबरहीन
- C. **Abstruse** (adjective) – Obscure, arcane, enigmatic, recondite, esoteric गूढ़

- D. **Effusive** (adjective) – Gushing, demonstrative, unreserved, enthusiastic, exuberant असंयत
15. **D) PQSR**
P: P sets the stage by discussing the desire of the Punjabi diaspora for more direct flights.
Q: Q talks about the continued desire for direct flights and specifically references Amritsar.
S: S provides the announcement about a specific change in flight routes from Amritsar, offering a solution to the previously mentioned problem.
R: R provides more details on the expansion of flight services, connecting back to the previous announcement in S.
16. **C) Take it with a grain of salt** (phrase) – To accept information or advice with skepticism
17. **B) Lead** (to) (verb) – bring about, give rise to, cause, result in, induce वजह बनना
 'To' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "lead to" एक specific phrase है जिसका अर्थ है "वजह बनना" या "परिणाम में आना।" इसलिए हम "lead" के बाद "to" का उपयोग करेंगे।
- 'To' should be used because "lead to" is a specific phrase meaning "to result in" or "to cause." In the given sentence, "The increase in the number of extreme weather events in recent years" has resulted in "some change in the developed countries' attitude toward the global climate financing architecture." Therefore, we use "to" after "lead."
18. **B) Incremental** (adjective) – Gradual, progressive, step-by-step, phased, वृद्धिशील
 'Incremental' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि इस संदर्भ में "incremental" का अर्थ होता है धीरे-धीरे और step-by-step बदलाव। दिए गए वाक्य में, developing countries के representatives को लगा कि फंडिंग ecosystem में परिवर्तन आनेवाले वर्षों में धीरे-धीरे होगा। इसलिए हम "incremental" का उपयोग करेंगे।
- 'Incremental' should be used because in this context, "incremental" means gradual and step-by-step changes. In the given sentence, representatives of the developing countries felt that changes in the funding ecosystem are likely to be gradual in the coming years. Hence, we will use "incremental".
19. **C) 'Their'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "their" प्रयोग होता है जब हम किसी समूह की numerical characteristic या ownership को दर्शाना चाहते हैं। दिए गए वाक्य में, "rich nations" से संदर्भित है, इसलिए हम "their" प्रयोग करेंगे ताकि उनकी commitment को दर्शाया जा सके।
- 'Their' should be used because "their" denotes the possessive form of 'they', showing numerical characteristic or ownership of a group. In the given sentence, it refers to "rich nations", so we use "their" to denote their commitment.
20. **C) Slated** (adjective) – Scheduled, planned, arranged, programmed, set, निर्धारित
 'Slated' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "slated" का अर्थ होता है "निर्धारित" या "अनुसूचित". दिए गए वाक्य में, developing countries को 2020 में धन प्राप्त करने की अपेक्षा थी, इसलिए "slated" यहाँ सही शब्द होगा।

- 'Slated' should be used because "slated" means "scheduled" or "planned". In the given sentence, developing countries were expected to receive the funds by 2020, so "slated" is the appropriate word here.



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