

PRESS RELEASE

2 August 2020

For Immediate Release.

CUT THE NOISE and #AskNISAU: A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND LIVE SESSION TO PROVIDE INDIAN STUDENTS WITH CREDIBLE & UNBIASED INFORMATION

The UK higher education sector is gearing up to welcome incoming students amid the testing times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, though it remains unclear what the real impact of the pandemic will be on Indian student mobility. The picture, however, is expected to become clearer between early and mid-September.

NISAU recently conducted a survey of prospective Indian students and offer-holders to capture the concerns and requirements of Indian students in greater detail. Amongst many interesting findings, some of which have led NISAU to posit a 'winning partnership' between Britain and Indian students in coming years, a key finding was that the majority of the students did not feel that they had received clear communication from their universities and expressed concerns about travel and safety. Additionally, students have increasingly been complaining about receiving misleading/biased information from educational agents; a sector that remains unregulated in India. Notably, NISAU had previously called on the Indian Government to appropriately regulate this sector.

To address students' ambiguities and apprehensions with credible information in an unbiased manner, the NISAU organised the UK's first ever session where current students, recent graduates and domain experts responded to students' queries live in a virtual #AskNISAU session broadcasted live on Facebook and Instagram.

The #AskNISAU session was an exclusive, live event for prospective students where their queries were personally handled by current students in the UK, student societies affiliated to the NISAU and sector experts. The session was divided into two parts: the first part provided general insights about studying and living in the UK, career advisory, and changed realities in the wake of COVID-19 and the second part was a live QnA, wherein participants' questions were addressed instantly. Panelists represented a cross-section of more than 30 universities covering universities in all 4 countries of the UK, that are sought after by Indian students.

The event saw a virtual attendance of over 2000 viewers during the session, and a reach of over 15,000 immediately after the session, indicating the degree to which such an event was a necessary intervention for the benefit of Indian students.

The queries handled and information disseminated can be broadly categorized into two heads: (1) Life in the UK and (2) Insights on college life, academics, employability, hybrid learning and so on. An overview of the new Points-Based Visa system applicable from 2021 was also provided alongside a more detailed discussion on the Graduate Route, which allows international students the chance to stay on in the UK for a period of 2 or 3 years depending on their course. Notably, the NISAU, alongside likeminded collectives had run a 6-year campaign lobbying the British Government for this visa, which is now regarded as a huge win for Indian students and widely considered to be an essential tool for Britain to market itself as the leading destination for international students.

The NISAU will next be conducting a pre-departure briefing at the end of August for all those students who have chosen to commence their studies in the UK from September 2020.

Commenting on the #AskNISAU event, Sanam Arora, founder and chairperson of NISAU said, *"This is the first time such an event has been organised and we're delighted to see the phenomenal response, which demonstrates how valuable and timely both our survey and intervention to provide this time-sensitive information to students have been. So far, the NISAU is the only body of its kind to unite Indian students and alumni outside India on a national platform; and today by using technology to connect current and potential Indian students to help the latter make the right choice, has emerged as a pioneer once again when it comes to ensuring the welfare of young Indians abroad. The Indian diaspora is a true asset, which must be cherished, nurtured and effectively deployed to shape India's future but it all starts with empowering our youth with the right information that can enable sound decision-making in the first important step of their careers. We are delighted to be this platform that provides credible and unbiased information."*



For queries, please contact:

Sanam Arora

Chairperson

National Indian Students and Alumni Union

M: 0044 (0) 7568194851

Vignesh Karthik KR

Head of Thought Leadership

National Indian Students and Alumni Union

M: 0091 (0) 9940586888

About National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK

The National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK (NISAU) is the pan-national umbrella organisation representing UK university students & alumni of Indian heritage. NISAU was created to provide a unifying voice for students with Indian heritage and promote, educate and celebrate Indian culture with people of all communities. NISAU aims to bring together all Indian student societies and alumni in the UK on one platform and is creating a unique, youth-led ecosystem to foster entrepreneurship and leadership. Its ultimate vision is to enable & empower the young Indian diaspora in the UK to contribute positively to India, UK, and the UK-India relationship. Visit www.nisu.org.uk and www.nisauupdates.com for further information.