

Headline: Union Budget 2025-26: Academics expect focus on STAM, IIM-IIT parity, lower tax for low-income students

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The screenshot shows the top portion of a news article on The Indian Express website. The page header includes the site's name, navigation menus, and a search bar. The article title is "Union Budget 2025-26: Academics expect focus on STAM, IIM-IIT parity, lower tax for low-income students". Below the title is a sub-headline: "Education Budget 2025 Expectations: Last year's budget allocated Rs 1.12 lakh crore to education, a 13% increase from the previous year. Experts this year say that additional investments are necessary to bridge skill gaps, expand digital learning and improve access to quality education." The author is identified as Mridumita Deka, and the article is dated Thursday, January 30, 2025. A large image shows a woman in a blue saree, likely a representative of academics, with the text "BUDGET EXPECTATION" overlaid. Below the image is a caption: "Union Budget 2025-26 on Feb 1, what do academics expect (Image designed by Abhishek Mitra/representative)". The main text begins with "Budget 2025 Expectations for Education Sector: The Union Budget 2025-26, set to be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1, carries high expectations from the education sector. Academics and industry leaders are urging the government to prioritise investments in STAM-based (Science, Technology, Arts, Mathematics) research, micro-credential courses, and enhanced financial support for management institutions. Calls for tax relief on educational expenses for low-income students, increased funding for school infrastructure, and stronger backing for health management education further highlight key areas of focus." A sub-section titled "Last year's budget allocated Rs 1.12 lakh crore to education" provides context on the previous year's spending. A quote from Dr. P. R. Sodani, president of IIHMR University, is included, along with a small portrait of him. The text continues: "Health management education is another critical focus area, according to Dr P R Sodani, president of IIHMR University, Jaipur. Sodani has called for strategic investments in skill-based learning, digital capabilities, and global partnerships to strengthen the sector. He stressed the need for greater collaboration between industry, academia, and start-ups to accelerate digital innovation and improve health outcomes. A digital health incentive plan could support the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, enhance data security, implement electronic health records, and upskill technical resources, Sodani said. Targeted investments in holistic health services would position India as a leader in high-quality health management education, he remarked." The article concludes with a paragraph: "A well-calibrated budget increase for education and research will drive innovation, empower youth, and solidify India's position as a global knowledge leader. As the nation looks ahead to the 2025-26 budget, progressive policy measures and increased investments will be key to transforming India's education landscape into an inclusive, future-ready, and globally competitive learning ecosystem."