

GULF EDUCATION

Online: www.gulfnews.com/GN-Focus

Facebook.com/GNFocus

Twitter.com: @GNFocus

THE TECH TAKE ON MBA

● **M. Sen** looks at the cutting-edge tools business schools are developing to deliver future-driven content

Technology is now a ubiquitous part of business globally, affecting everything from marketing to finance. Business schools across the world are fast adapting to make their programmes increasingly relevant to this enhanced tech environment while adopting the tools to deliver a more immersive and interactive learning experience.

SP Jain School of Global Management, which has campuses in Dubai, Sydney, Mumbai and Singapore, was among the first business schools to offer a master's specialisation in e-business, along with six-month programmes in technologies such as big data, digital marketing, fintech and cybersecurity. The school recently introduced a three-year bachelor's programme in data science in India and Australia. The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bengaluru, one of India's premier business schools, now offers courses including technology management, financial technologies, digital marketing, big data and analytics.

"What we teach, how we teach and who teaches are all [now] technology-driven," says Nitish Jain, President of SP Jain.

"Our master's students, for instance, explore how technologies such as big data, AI and blockchain... could be used to change existing business models and create new businesses. We have introduced a suite of technology-driven laboratories — one for blockchain, one for machine learning, an IoT lab and neuroscience centre."

Students at SP Jain are constantly encouraged to innovate using these new technologies, Jain says, describing how marketing students, examine the

ways in which machine learning can be used to analyse data and make effective market predictions.

Shifting focus

Technology is today integrated into business' DNA, driving innovation and even disruption of existing business models.

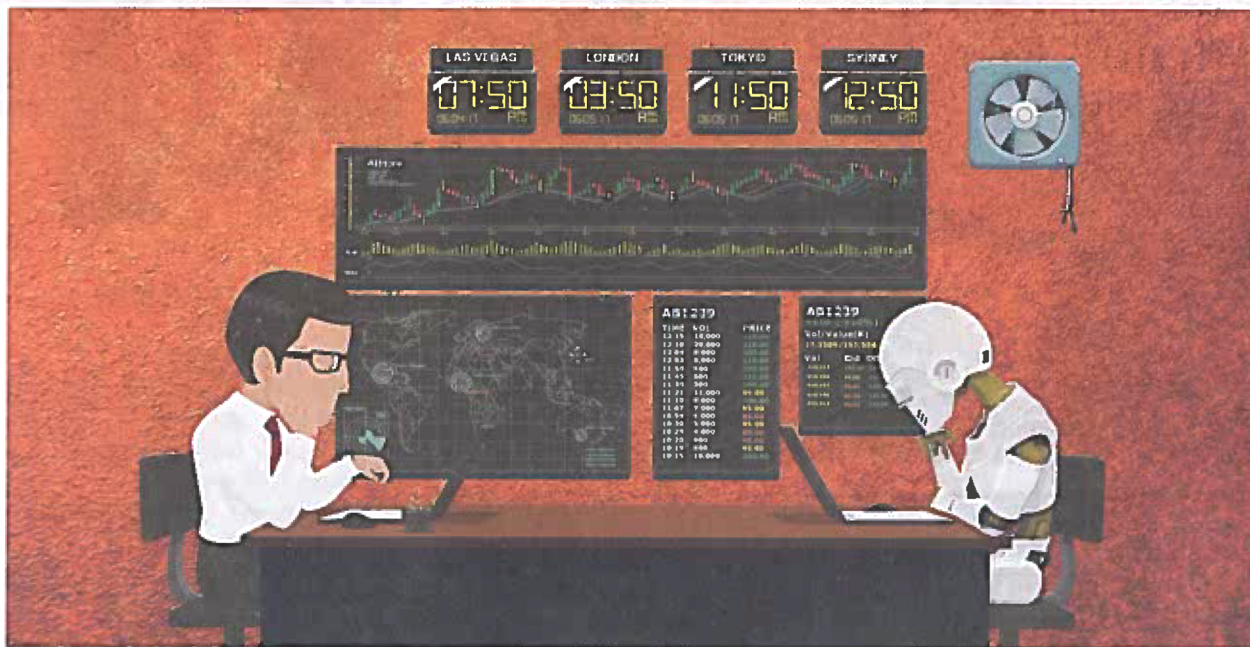
"Business schools being a part of the ecosystem cannot be indifferent to those changes," says Prof. P.D. Jose, faculty from the strategy department at IIM Bengaluru and Chairman of IIMBx, IIM Bengaluru's

technology-driven online learning programme. "We adapt at two levels — by refining content and re-looking at delivery."

IIM Bengaluru offers both postgraduate and executive education courses in these areas. For example, its weekend post-graduate programme in enterprise management has a significant focus on technology, as a majority of students from the institute are drawn from the tech sector.

Elsewhere, Harvard Business School launched

HBX, a platform to support the delivery of distinctive online business-focused offerings, in 2014. Jim Aisner, Director of Media and Public Relations at Harvard Business School, puts this into perspective: "There is great interest in and commitment to various aspects of technology at a school like this, whether in case studies, in the research done by our faculty, in the technology available in our classrooms, and in an interdisciplinary research effort called the HBS Digital Initiative."



Shutterstock



Nitish Jain
SP Jain School of
Global Management



Prof. P.D. Jose
Indian Institute of Management
Bengaluru

Interactive teaching

The delivery of business school courses is also going through significant transformation, taking them beyond the traditional classroom. IIM-B says the institute experimented with a variety of approaches, including the use of MOOCs, blended learning and other technology-supported learning efforts. More recently, it tried to recreate the experience of a real classroom in a virtual environment so students in distant locations experience the intimacy of a classroom environment from their homes or workplaces.

"The school also uses learning management systems created by various vendors to facilitate student learning, using platforms such as Zoom, Webex and Adobe to narrowcast classes to different locations," Jose adds. IIM Bengaluru's IIMBx is an open education platform that lets the institute's faculty deliver its courses to anyone interested. "Nearly 40 courses are available on multiple platforms including edX, IIMBx and Swayam, the national platform set up by the government of India," explains Jose. "Over these platforms, cours-

The initial HBX offering, CORE, comprised three interlinked courses: business analytics, economics for managers and financial accounting. "HBS is also on the leading edge of online interactive education (not for a degree, but for learning the language and basics of data analytics, accounting, and economics) via HBX," Aisner says. "These are not passive MOOCs, but modules that mirror the kind of rigorous interactive learning that goes on every day in our classrooms."