

Union HRD Minister interacts with students across the country through webinar

There will be no hike in fees for IIT, IIITs and NITs for the academic year 2020-21 Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

NEET to be held on 26th July, 2020- Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

JEE MAIN to be held on 18th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd July, 2020 - Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

Dates of UGC NET 2020 and JEE (Advanced) to be announced soon Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

Dates of CBSE 12th Board examination will be announced in two days - HRD Minister

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Union HRD Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank interacted with the students across the country through a webinar. During the one hour interaction, the Minister responded to the various concerns and queries of the students relating to school examinations, entrance examinations, Academic Calendar, online education, Fees, Mental health of students, international students, fellowships among others.

Speaking on the occasion the Minister said that the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi is very concerned about well being and academic activities of the students of the country. In view of this Ministry is taking all measures to quickly and immediately address the concerns of the students. Shri Pokhriyal appreciated the Minister of State for HRD Shri Sanjay Dhotre for his commendable work done to ensure safety and quality education to students.

During the interaction, Union HRD Minister announced the dates of pending entrance examinations. He informed that the NEET will be held on 26th July, 2020. He further informed that JEE MAIN will be held on 18th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd July, 2020. He added that JEE(Advance) may be held in August. He said that the date of UGC NET 2020 and CBSE 12th Board examinations will be announced soon.

While interacting with students on the issue of mental health, the ShriRameshPokhriyal said that students must remain calm and focused on their course of studies. Students should develop their timetable of study and take small breaks in between. The Minister said to excel in the entrance examination, it is important to know the syllabus and exam pattern. He appealed students to not be anxious and, eat healthy and stay safe.

ShriPokhriyal asked students preparing for entrance examination to access lectures on Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology on the official website of the National Testing Agency at the link: <https://nta.ac.in/LecturesContent>. He added that various platforms of MHRD can be used for preparing for entrance exams. These include Swayamprabha DTH channel, IIT PAL of SWAMPYABHA, DIKSHA, E pathshala, National Digital Library, SWAYAM, e-PG Pathshala, Shodhganga, e-ShodhSindhu, e-Yantra, Spoken Tutorial and Virtual Labs. The Minister was delighted to inform students that the number of hits on key online educational portals in higher education like SWAYAM, SWAYAM Prabha, Virtual Labs, FOSSEE, E Yantra and Spoken Tutorial has gone up to 5 times since lockdown.

In a question relating to students belonging to village area with glitches in networks, the Minister replied that MHRD has tied up with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to air SWAYAM PRABHA channels on the DTH platforms of Tata Sky and Airtel DTH operators, DD-DTH, Dish TV and Jio TV App. He said that SWAYAM PRABHA is a group of 32 DTH channels providing high quality educational curriculum based course contents covering diverse disciplines such as arts, science, commerce, performing arts, social sciences and humanities subjects, engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture etc to all teachers, students and citizens across the country interested in lifelong learning. The channel number in different DTH service providers are as follows: In Airtel TV: Channel # 437, Channel # 438 & Channel #439, in vmVideocon: Channel # 475, Channel # 476, Channel # 477, in Tata sky: Channel # 756 which pops up window for Swayamprabha DTH channels and in Dish TV: Channel # 946, Channel # 947, Channel #949, Channel # 950. The Minister highlighted that the Ministry is trying to explore the option of All India Radio, Doordarshan and use 2G network to transact the curriculum to students.

While responding to the query relating to fee hike for NITs, IITs & IIITs for academic year 20-21, the Minister said that there will be no fees increase for IIT, IIITs and NITs for the academic year 2020-21.

Regarding the migration of students of Navodaya Vidyalayas to their respective states and home, the Minister informed that the migration process for all schools is being pursued and it has got momentum with a DO letter from MHRD to State Chief Secretaries. He informed that out of 173 Schools, more than 62 schools have initiated the process. All Schools wherein migrated students are there, are being monitored regularly. Students on movement are given sanitizers, masks, small soaps and eatables like snacks made from JNV mess. He added that all JNVs en route to travel are supporting these students with food, stay, snacks and healthcare.

While replying to questions, ShriPokhriyal informed that MHRD is planning to bridge the academic gap created due to COVID outbreak. MHRD has encouraged students to keep on learning and to aid the learning through various e-learning resources and digital platforms for both school and higher education. ShriPokhriyal informed students that the Alternative Calendar for the primary, upper primary stage and secondary has also been released. This Calendar provides guidelines to teachers on the use of various technological tools and social media tools available for imparting education in fun-filled, interesting ways, which can be used by learners, parents and teachers even while at home.

Regarding the concerns raised by students relating to board examinations, the Minister clarified that the Board will conduct examinations for only main subjects that will be required for promotion and maybe crucial for

admissions in higher educational institutions. He informed that a Press Release of CBSE dated 01.4.2020 elaborates upon the 29 subjects and other details which can be accessed on the Boards website i.e. <http://cbse.nic.in/>. He informed that Exams for 10th class are over for all over the country except North east Delhi and adequate time of 10 days will be given to all stakeholders before starting the examinations. The Minister also clarified to the students of North East Delhi that there is no need to reappear in these examinations if you have already appeared. These exams will be conducted again for those few students who could not appear in these exams on the scheduled date due to the impact of law and order issues on them. Students may also refer to the Frequently Asked Questions uploaded by CBSE on their website.

Shri Pokhriyal highlighted that the government is planning to tackle the academic loss of students during the lockdown period. As a response to COVID-19 lockdown, CBSE will assess the loss of instructional time for proportionate reduction in curriculum load for Board Exams 2021. In accordance, Course Committees of the Board have initiated work on reduced syllabus in various scenarios. The students will be notified on the same soon.

Regarding the examination in Universities, UGC in consultation with MHRD have issued the guidelines. The guidelines can be accessed on UGC's website. In reference to examinations, major recommendations are as follows -

- Maintaining the sanctity of academic expectations and integrity of examination process, the universities may adopt alternative and simplified modes and methods of examinations to complete the process in shorter period of time in compliance with CBCS requirements as prescribed by UGC from time to time
- For intermediate semester/year students, the universities may conduct examinations, after making a comprehensive assessment of their level of preparedness, residential status of the students, and status of COVID-19 pandemic spread in different regions / state and other factors.
- In case the situation does not appear to be normal in view of COVID-19, in order to maintain social distancing, safety and health of the students, grading of the students could be composite of 50% marks on the basis of the pattern of internal evaluation adopted by the universities and the remaining 50% marks can be awarded on the basis of performance in previous semester only (if available). The internal evaluation can be continuous evaluation, prelims, mid-semester, internal evaluation or whatever name is given for student progression.
- If the student wishes to improve the grades, he/she may appear in special exams for such subjects during next semester.
- Timeline of examinations - Conduct of Examinations:
 - (i) Terminal Semester/ Year - 01.07.2020 to 15.07.2020
 - (ii) Intermediate Semester/Year - 16.07.2020 to 31.07.2020

The Minister highlighted that the admissions to the UG and PG programmes for the session 2020-21 may be completed by 31.08.2020. If necessity arises, provisional admissions may also be made and relevant documents of qualifying examination may be accepted up to 30.09.2020. The Academic Session 2020-21 may commence from 01.8.2020 for old students and from 01.09.2020 for fresh students. More details can be obtained from the UGC website.

The Minister expressed his happiness to interact with the students. He appealed the students not to panic. He said the Ministry is committed to ensure safety and academic welfare of the students. He also informed that latest information regarding examinations, academic calendar, etc, will be available on the website of the Ministry and its autonomous institutions from time to time.

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