

Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Higher Education

MONTHLY SUMMARY FOR THE CABINET FOR THE MONTH OF MAY, 2020:

1. Events for the month

A. National *Abhyas* App:

Human Resource Development Minister launched a new mobile app called the 'National Test *Abhyas*'. The App has been developed by National Testing Agency (NTA) to enable candidates to take mock tests for upcoming exams such as JEE Main, NEET under the NTA's purview. The app has been launched to facilitate candidates' access to high quality mock tests since there was a demand for making up the loss to students due to closure of educational institutions and NTA's Test-Practice Centers (TPCs) due to the continuing lockdown. The app also has an offline mode where students, on downloading the mock tests, can attempt the test without the internet.

B. Two degree courses simultaneously

University Grants Commission has approved a proposal to allow students to pursue two degree programmes at the same time. One of the degrees has to be in the regular mode and the other either in open & distance learning or online. A student can pursue two degrees in different streams as well as from different institutions.

C. SAMADHAN online challenge

"SAMADHAN" was launched by MHRD innovation cell and AICTE in collaboration with Forge and InnovatioCuris to test the ability of students, educators & individuals/start-ups to innovate for solutions to fight COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of over 100 mentors participated in the competition with some mentors mentoring over 10 teams. An eminent Jury member comprising experts from various Govt departments, international agencies and industry. Winning teams has been awarded prize money. Further, incubation GRANT process from AICTE has been initiated under existing incubation support scheme. **(see Annexure)**

D. Human Resource Development Minister interacted with the students across the country through a webinar on 5th May, 2020

During the one-hour interaction, the Minister responded to the various concerns and queries of the students relating to school examinations, entrance examinations, etc. Some of the highlights of the interaction are:

- There will be no hike in fees for IIT, IIITs and NITs for the academic year 2020-21.
- NEET to be held on 26th July, 2020.
- JEE MAIN to be held on 18th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd July, 2020

E. Human Resource Development Minister interacted with Heads of more than 45,000 Higher Educational Institutions across the country on 28th May, 2020 through Webinar hosted by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bengaluru. The highlights are:

- Urges all the Higher Educational Institutions to take part in NAAC accreditation process.
- All Universities must constitute a special cell to address various issues of students related to academic calendar and examinations arising out of special circumstances due to Covid 19.
- A task force has been created in UGC and NCERT to resolve the different issues of students.

F. Major tasks done during COVID by UGC :

- Grants amounting to Rs. 293.41 crore were released to UGC towards financial aid.
- 546th and 547th meetings were held by the University Grants Commission during May, 2020 through video conferencing.

G. Achievements of Scholarship Division for FY 2020-21 till May,2020

- A total of 333 candidates were disbursed scholarships worth Rs. 55.70 lakh under the Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship for College and University.
- Rs. 20 crore has been released to Canara Bank in respect of claims for the financial year 2018-19 under Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme.

H. Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) : As on 31st May, 2020, cumulatively, projects worth Rs.40,192.2 crore have been approved under HEFA. Loan amount of Rs. 29,233.84 crore have been sanctioned and Rs. 8,476.27 crore have actually been disbursed. The number of educational institutions that have availed funding through HEFA stands at 84. In the month of May, 2020 alone, an amount of Rs 692.20 crores have been disbursed by HEFA across institutions of MHRD and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

J. Promoting Research: Collaborative Research grant programme: Release of 3rd instalment Collaborative Research Proposals of AICTE for Rs. 9.58 cr. will be carried out after approval by MHRD.

K. Quality Improvement:

(i) Enhancing learning outcome through digital pedagogy

Digital Learning: Majority institutions have completed leftover syllabus through videos on YouTube, google classroom, WhatsApp classrooms, Telegram Virtual Lab, SWAYAM, NPTEL, and MOOC. The collected information indicates that 5500 digital classrooms have been developed by the faculty from 125 TEQIP institutes catering to approx. 2.60 lakhs students (80%).

(ii) Hackathon

- National Virtual Hackathon to solve India's biggest challenge 'COVID-19 CRISIS' conducted by NASSCOM SSC. **331** students have registered from TEQIP institutions. The Hackathon started on 16th May 2020. Result will be declared on 8th June 2020.

Annexure

Under Track 1: Winning teams are:

Rank	Name	Project	Award amount INR
1	Swapnil Shankar Mane Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune	To <i>design</i> a semi- autonomous vehicle Robot for Large area S anitization	50,000
2	Swaprava Nath IIT Kanpur	Contact tracing and subsequent collection of further information about these contacts.	30,000
3	Bhargav R Meghaniy Babaria Institute of Pharmacy	This novel mask uses metallic nanoparticles that have proven antiviral and antimicrobial activity.	20,000

Under Track 2. Student Innovators & Educators Category, winning teams are:

Rank	Name	Project	Award amount INR
1	Livonian Bannariamma Institute of Technology, Tamil Nadu	An IoT enabled handwash monitoring device that integrates sanitizer and water dispenser for washing hands and also monitoring handwash gestures complying with WHO standards.	50,000
2	Smart Triage	An ML-based remote triage solution model designed to conduct risk analysis based on data collected about lifestyle habits, medical history, lifestyle, co-morbidities parameters & drug usage from individuals	30,000

3	Action Groupon AI and Radiology	An AI-driven radiology and clinical datamining system for evidence-based medicinefor COVID-19 patient treatment.	20,000
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Under Track 2, Startups & Professionals Category, winning teams are:

R a n k	Name	Project	Awar d amou ntINR
1	SenseGiz Technologies	An end-user device/ecosystem capable of tracing, tracking, and monitoring the movements of individuals within a virtual fence demarcated for each individual/locality. The startup is working on a quick deployment for pilot testing in the COVID19 scenario	50,000
2	InnoDX Solutions PvtLtd	A rapid-screening solution using LAMP techniques for rapid screening, which can accurately indicate the risk of the person to test positive for COVID-19. This is a low-cost alternative to RT-PCR tests and can provide test results in about 1.5 hours as opposed to 4 hours. The uniqueness of the solution is that it uses a color-based result which makes it usable even for the unlettered.	30,000

3	Blockfrog Technologies	<p>A compact, easily portable medical-grade refrigeration device using a patented rapid-cooling technology that limits temperature fluctuation to less than 0.5-degrees Celsius and achieves cooling in half the time as compared to ice-based refrigeration. This portable medical-grade refrigeration device solves the lack of reliable, low-cost, and convenient cold-storage systems which is a major challenge to overcome when it comes to safely transport samples from hundreds of different locations to the fewer COVID-19 test centers.</p>	20000
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