

**Ministry of Education
Department of Higher Education**

MONTHLY SUMMARY FOR THE CABINET FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL, 2021:

1. Disruption due to covid pandemic situation & Preventive measures taken to contain its spread.

a) Impact on office work in the Ministry and measures taken to prevent it

With the second wave of coronavirus, 106 cases have been reported in MoE during March 21 and April 21. Periodic RTPCR tests have been held in Shastri Bhawan and a vaccination camp was organised for the officers/officials of the Ministry on 30th April, 2021.

To take measures to prevent its spread, the physical attendance of the officers of the level of Under Secretary or equivalent and below has been restricted to 50% of the actual strength. The officers/staff attending the office, have been asked to follow staggered timings and avoid overcrowding.

b) Postponement of all offline examinations scheduled in the month of May, 2021-

Instructions have been issued to all Vice Chancellors/Directors of Institutions to postpone all offline examinations scheduled in the month of May, 2021. The Online examinations, etc may however be continued. The decision on further examination will be reviewed in the first week of June, 2021.

The institutions have been further advised to ensure that immediate support, if needed, should be provided to students at the earliest, to keep them out of any possible distress. All Institutions have to encourage eligible persons to go for vaccination and pursue vaccination drive & ensure that everyone follows COVID -19 appropriate behaviour to remain safe.

c) Postponement of various other examinations conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA)

- **Postponement of Joint Entrance Examination (Main) - April & May 2021 Sessions** - which was scheduled to be held from 27 to 30 April 2021 & 24 to 28 May 2021 respectively.
- **Postponement of the UGC-NET December 2020 cycle (May 2021) Examination** was scheduled between 2nd and 17 May 2021
- **Postponement of All India AYUSH Post Graduate Entrance Examination (AIAPGET) – 2021** - which was scheduled for 07 June 2021 has been postponed for a minimum of three months

d) Delay in academic calendar for 2020-2021

With the Central Board Secondary Education (CBSE) postponing Class 12 school board examinations, the admission process for undergraduate courses may get delayed by a few months this year and it will impact the new academic session.

2. Minister of State for Education addressed the consultation meeting of Education Ministers of E9 countries.

Minister of State for Education, Shri Sanjay Dhotre addressed at the consultation meeting of Education Ministers of E9 countries on E9 initiative: "Scaling up digital learning to accelerate progress towards SDG4". Education Minister of Bangladesh Deputy Secretary General, United Nations and Education Ministers from the E9 countries and officials from the United Nations, UNICEF and UNESCO also attended the meeting.

Building on the established partnership of E9 countries allows Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan the opportunity to benefit from UN's global initiative and accelerate progress on digital learning and skills towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 of Quality Education.

3. Education Minister launched NanoSniffer, the world's first Microsensor based Explosive Trace Detector (ETD)

Education Minister launched NanoSniffer, the world's first Microsensor based Explosive Trace Detector (ETD) developed by NanoSniff Technologies, an NT Bombay incubated startup.

'NanoSniffer' is the world's first Explosive Trace Detector developed using a microelectromechanical system (MEMS), with its core technology being protected by patents in the US, Europe and India. Nano Sniffer is a 100% made in India product in terms of research & development and manufacturing. The indigenously developed ETD device can detect explosives in less than 10 seconds and it also identifies and categorizes them into different classes. It detects all classes of military, conventional and homemade explosives.

4. Education minister addressed the 34th Convocation of IGNOU

Education minister addressed the 34th Convocation of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) through virtual mode on 15th April, 2021. The University awarded 2, 37,844 degrees, diplomas and certificates of different programmes to the successful students at 34th convocation. This time female students have excelled and out of total 29 medals, 21 were awarded to female students and of the total Phd and MPhil degrees awarded, 37 were to female students.

5. Education Minister presented the AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020 on women empowerment to the winners on 7th April, 2021. It is an initiative of AICTE for instituting the Lilavati Awards which is a great motivation for girls to join higher education.