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Ministry of Human Resource Development

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Union Minister for HRD Shri Prakash Javadekar, in a reply to a starred question in Lok Sabha, today said that the Government has created National Testing Agency (NTA) as an autonomous and self-sustained premier testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for higher education, which were being conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The objective is to have a specialized and dedicated body for conducting these high-stake entrance examinations and at the same time, relieve CBSE of this responsibility to enable it to fulfil its core mandate. The Government has mandated NTA to conduct the examination in a scientific manner involving experts. All the examinations of NTA were mandated to be conducted twice a year for the benefit of students.

Based on the request of the stakeholders, Ministries/Departments/Agencies, the UGC-NET, JEE(Main), NEET-UG, C-MAT and C-PAT examinations have been entrusted to NTA. NTA has notified the examination schedule for the year 2019 on its website <https://ntaexams.co.in>. NTA proposes to conduct the tests twice a year in order to give the students adequate opportunity to bring out their best as well as to remove the possibility of human error in evaluation.

The Minister also informed the house that as per rules and regulations of the NTA, the General Body, which decides policy matters, comprises of 17 members who are educationists of repute and nominees of the Government both from the Centre and the State. In addition, the General Body will have Testing experts, representative of Higher Educational Institutions, School Education Boards and officials of the NTA. The objectives of the NTA, inter-alia, are conducting efficient, transparent tests designed in a scientific manner for assessing competence of students. It will train subject matter experts and prepare test items in collaboration with psychometricians to ensure that the tests are well balanced. Data of previous tests will be analyzed and deliberated with subject matter experts for designing better question papers. NTA will be a self-sustained organization. However, in order to set up and start its operations, a provision of Rs.25 crore as one-time grant has been made, out of which a sum of Rs.10 crore has been released.

Extensive consultations have been made with the concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India as well as other stakeholders both from Central and State Government in a workshop held on 1-9-2017 before the proposal was approved.

While replying to a supplementary question, the Minister said that the examinations will be conducted on computer based rather than online mode. He also said that special centres will be made for students of remote areas to make them familiar with the new pattern.

While replying to a CBSE related question, he said that CBSE has informed that there have been only two instances of leakage of question papers one in 2004 in respect of AIPMT and the other in 2011 in respect of AIEEE. However, there has never been delay in declaration of results of such examinations. In order to ensure absolute transparency, CBSE displays the OMR sheets, answer

key and the answers of the candidates on its website before declaration of result, which can be challenged by the candidates.

With regard to Board examinations, CBSE has further informed that leakage of Economics of Class XII and Mathematics of Class X could be confirmed. Re-examination of Economics for Class XII was held on 25th April, 2018. It was, however, decided not to hold a re-test for the Class X Mathematics keeping in view the interest of students and the fact that Class X examination is essentially a gateway for class XI and an internal segment of school education system. The matter was reported to the police, who after investigation arrested the people involved in leakage and the school concerned was disaffiliated by CBSE.

As a remedial step, CBSE has decided to send encrypted question papers to the examination centres with option of multiple sets. This was successfully implemented in the compartment examinations in July, 2018 for select subjects. Norms for centre fixation and custodian identification have been made more stringent and every centre has been assigned external observers to monitor the affairs of examination. CBSE has also adopted a three tier system to address errors in totalling and marking by teachers.

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