

Centre approves new edu policy, renames ministry

REVISION Common entrance exam for universities among highlights of new education policy

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NEW DELHI: A single regulator for higher education institutions, multiple entry and exit options in degree courses, discontinuation of MPhil programmes, low stakes board exams, common entrance exams for universities are among the highlights of the new National Education Policy (NEP) approved by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday.

The policy, which was framed in 1986 and revised in 1992, had not been revised since then. The Cabinet also approved changing the name of the HRD ministry to Education ministry.

"NEP 2020 aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3 pc (2018) to 50 pc by 2035. At least 3.5 crore new seats will be added to higher education institutions," HRD higher education Secretary Amit Khare said. "The policy envisages broad based, multi-disciplinary, holis-



Union ministers Prakash Javadekar (right) and Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank at NMC in New Delhi on Wednesday

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tic Under Graduate education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education and multiple entry and exit points with appropriate certification. Under Graduate education can be of 3 or 4 years with multiple exit options and appropriate certification within this period," he said.

Among the key reforms in the

policy are a single regulator for all higher education institutions except for legal and medical colleges, common entrance exam for admissions to universities and colleges to be conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) and common norms to be in place for private and public higher education institutions under the Central government's new Education

Policy. "Affiliation of colleges is to be phased out in 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism is to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges. Over a period of time, it is envisaged that every college would develop into either an autonomous degree-granting college, or a constituent college of a university," Khare said.

Elaborating on the reforms in school education, HRD Secretary Anita Karwal said, "Board exams will be low stake. The focus will be on testing concepts and knowledge application. Home language, mother tongue or regional language to be medium of instruction up to class 5."

The new education policy was part of the Bharatiya Janata Party's manifesto ahead of the 2014 general election.

In May 2016, a 'Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy' under the chairmanship of TSR Subramanian, former cabinet secretary, submitted its report.