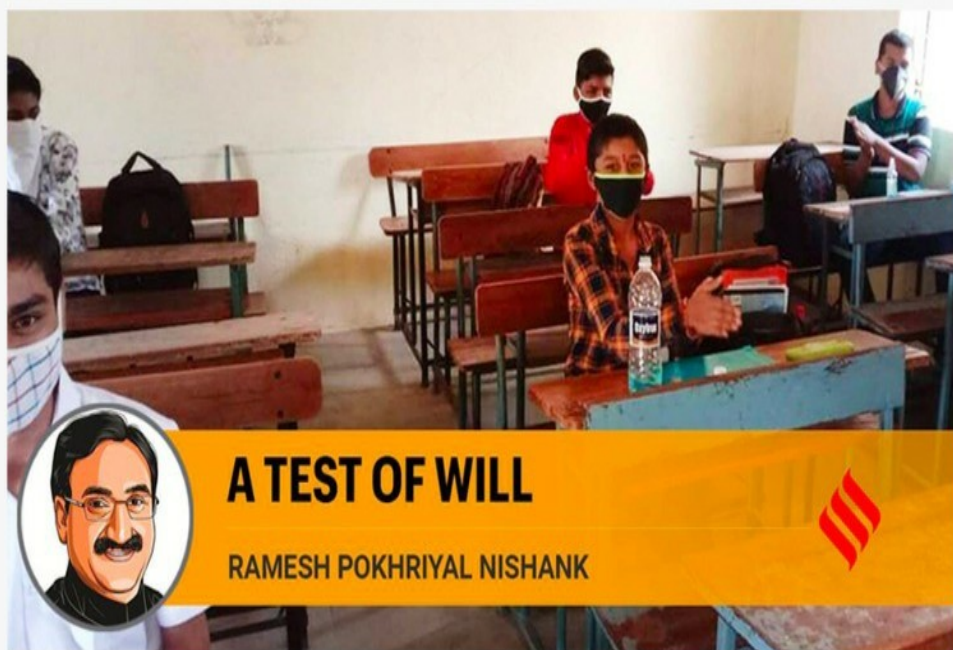


Preparing for board exams 2021: Determination, cooperation and administrative efficiency

Government is committed to ensuring that examinations are conducted in a hassle-free and safe way, with enough flexibility for students.



Everyone agrees that this is the first level of critical evaluation and assessment that decides the categorisation of merit, career choices and pursuance of higher academic goals. For example, to get a seat in a top-notch college, you need to get a good percentage, and that should come from a well-laid evaluation methodology. The CBSE Class XII board exams have an all-India character, based on which admissions to higher education institutions are conducted across various states.

Covid-19 has posed an unprecedented challenge to humanity. In the midst of this crisis, the entire ecosystem of education is being geared up to ensure the safety of students while also ensuring the continuation of the learning process. Conducting examinations for students in the prevailing Covid scenario is a huge challenge that does not need elaboration. This is especially so, when it comes to the Class XII board examinations, which play a significant role in every student's career graph and roadmap for life.

Taking cognisance of the urgency of the situation and to ensure the safety and the future prospects of our students, the Prime Minister constituted a high-powered committee under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. I, along with my cabinet colleagues Prakash Javadekar and Smriti Irani, attended the meeting to discuss how Class XII examinations would be conducted. It should be noted that all the committee members are familiar with the dynamics of the education system by virtue of their previous government and administrative experience in the field of education.

On May 21, the committee held its first pan-India participatory consultation meeting with all the state education ministers, state education secretaries and chairpersons of the state education boards to discuss the future roadmap and possible avenues of action regarding the board examination. Almost everyone present in the consultation agreed that having limited exams is the best course to follow, providing adequate cushion time to start the examination process. Conducting the examination for students in their respective schools will ease the

administrative challenges. We had faced similar challenges in 2020, too, and we not only successfully carried out the board examinations, but also conducted competitive examinations like JEE and NEET, wherein more than 21 lakh students participated. This is a unique accomplishment in its own way and is a superb example of cooperation, support and the synergy of efforts between various stakeholders coming together for the safety and future of the younger generations. It marks our collective success and sets a perfect example of team spirit. The safe conduct of these examinations has become a source of immense learning for all of us and is an excellent model for other countries to emulate. In 2021, we must once again rise to the occasion.

Considering all the challenges and existing limitations, we must take a timely decision to prevent uncertainties amongst students, teachers and parents. A decision in time will help lakhs of students explore career opportunities in international colleges and universities for the coming academic sessions. This will also help our students align with the upcoming sessions, prevent loss of valuable time, and mitigate academic losses. All these are interlinked facets that must be analysed and evaluated as a whole

and not in isolation. I assure all students and their parents that any decision taken will follow the yardstick that the safety and future of students is the highest priority for us.

The course of undertaking the limited examination with adequate safety measures will give our generation a sense of pride in their abilities and boost their confidence as opposed to getting a general “pass” degree, as offered during the pandemic. There is no denying that some of our students will have a difficult time due to Covid, which will deny them the option to take the exams in ideal conditions. For such cases, adequate opportunities will be given to take the exams in the second phase or as an additional chance in an improved scenario. We are committed to ensuring that examinations are conducted in a hassle-free and safe way, with all our students getting adequate flexibility, options, and time for undertaking such a critical evaluation as they embark on their future educational journey.

The Class XII board exams are deemed a significant milestone in a student’s educational journey. They have different

importance and a different context altogether, and are an essential yardstick in determining the life trajectories of a nation’s human capital. We must take this as a challenge to our national will, cooperation, the synergy of efforts and administrative efficiency. Together we shall overcome.