

# NEWS TODAY

## MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT RELEASED EIGHT-STEP DIGITAL EDUCATION GUIDELINES PRAGYATA

- This will help in **mitigating COVID-19 impact that has led to closure of schools and has impacted learning** of over 240 million children.
- Guidelines are prepared by NCERT and are only **advisory in nature**, and **State governments have to build on them and formulate their own rules**, based on local needs.
  - > It will be relevant for **school heads, teachers, parents, teacher educators and students**
  - > It will help in **planning and implementation of digital education with examples**.
- **Guidelines outlines suggestions on-** Physical, mental health and wellbeing during digital education, Cyber safety and ethical practices, Concerns while planning online and digital education like duration, screen time, inclusiveness etc.
- **Other Key points**
  - > **For Parents:** Understand need for physical, mental health and wellbeing along with cyber safety measures for children.
  - > **For school heads and teachers:** support to students with special needs, balanced online and offline activities etc.
  - > **Use of alternative academic calendar of NCERT**, for both, learners having access to digital devices and learners having limited or no access.
  - > **Need to unify all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education**, benefitting school going children.

**MHRD** | Government of India  
Ministry of Human Resource Development

**'PRAGYATA'**

**GUIDELINES ON DIGITAL EDUCATION**  
to assist school heads, teachers, parents & students in e-learning

**National Initiatives for Digital Education and Teacher Preparation**

- > DIKSHA, SWAYAM Prabha, SWAYAM MOOCS, Radio Vahini, Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY), Shiksha Vaani etc.

The diagram shows eight steps in colored hexagons: Plan (pink), Review (green), Arrange (dark green), Guide (orange), Appreciate (purple), Track (dark blue), Assign (light blue), and Yak(Talk) (purple).

## MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION OPTIONS TO FUND UDAN SCHEME AS AIRLINES FACE LOW DEMAND DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Possible options for funding include raising funds through **securitisation of ticket levy** and **reduction in number of subsidised seats** on routes with higher demand.
- Presently under the scheme, **airlines are offered viability gap funding (VGF) for 50% of the seats on a flight** and fares for those seats are capped by government.
  - > Scheme is funded through **Rs 50 levy on flight tickets on major routes contributing to 80% of VGF**, and balance 20% is provided by state governments.
    - ⇒ VGF is a one-time grant provided to support infrastructure projects that are **economically justified but fall short of financial viability**.
  - > However, because of the restricted resumption of domestic flights, both **less number of flights as well as low flight load is resulting in lower contribution to VGF**.
- **About UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik Scheme)**
  - > Launched in 2016, it aims to **provide connectivity to un-served and under-served airports** of the country through revival of existing air-strips and airports.
  - > It is a key component of **National Civil Aviation Policy 2016**.
  - > It will **create economically viable and profitable flights on regional routes**.

## NATIONAL HOUSING BANK (NHB) DISBURSES RECORD RS 25,000 CRORE TO HFCs IN JUST 4 MONTHS

- Move is to **bail out cash starved housing finance companies (HFCs)**.
  - > Under Atmanirbhar Bharat package, NHB was provided a special liquidity facility of Rs 10,000 crore to obviate COVID-19 related issues faced by housing finance sector.
- **A HFC is a company registered under Companies Act, 1956** which primarily transacts or has as one of its principal objects, transacting of the business of providing finance for housing, whether directly or indirectly.
  - > **HFCs cannot accept demand deposits**, do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself.
  - > **HFC is considered a NBFC** under the RBI's regulations.
  - > Last year, regulation of HFCs was handed over to RBI from NHB.
- **Why funding shortage to HFCs?**
  - > Banks remained **cautious in lending to NBFC**, especially after IL&FS crisis.
    - ⇒ In 2018, India's **leading infrastructure finance company IL&FS** defaulted on payments to lenders triggering panic in the markets.
  - > Also, there was **risk-aversion among mutual funds towards NBFCs** after Franklin Templeton (mutual fund investment company) wound up six of its debt schemes.
  - > This was **coupled with COVID-19 pandemic** which exacerbated fund-raising issues of small HFCs

## MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT PUBLISHES DRAFT TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) RULES, 2020

- Draft Rules were published under **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**.
  - > Act aims to **end discrimination against transgender persons** in accessing education, employment and healthcare.
  - > According to 2011 Census, Transgender population was **around 4.88 lakh**.
- **Key points in draft rules**
  - > District Magistrate would issue a **transgender identity certificate** and card based on an affidavit by the applicant, **but without any medical examination**.
  - > **Removed previous draft's provision** to penalize false declaration to obtain certificate of identity.
  - > Government is required to take **adequate steps to "prohibit discrimination in any government or private organisation or establishment, including in the areas of education, employment, etc.**
    - ⇒ **Educational institutions to have a committee which transgender persons can approach**.
  - > Makes states responsible for **"timely prosecution of individuals"** charged under **Section 18 of the Act** (dealing with offences against the transgender community).
  - > State governments have to set up **Transgender Protection Cell** to monitor cases of offences against transgender persons.
  - > Provides for **review of all existing educational, social security, health schemes, welfare measures** etc. to include transgender persons.
  - > **Mandatory for all establishments**, public and private, to have equal opportunity policies to include transgender persons.

# GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING HIKE IN ACTIVE PHARMACEUTICAL INGREDIENTS (APIs) IMPORT DUTIES

- The move aims to **give a boost to the country's bulk drug manufacturing industry.**
  - India currently **imposes a basic customs duty of around 10%** on APIs.
- API or bulk drug, is **biologically active component of a drug product** which is required to make medicines.
- Also under AtmaNirbhar Bharat, India is aiming to reduce dependence on API imports and achieve self-reliance.
  - However, **India's manufacturing capacity has been smaller** compared to some other countries, making it difficult to compete with cheaper imports.
    - ➔ India is **currently dependent on China for nearly 70% of API imports.**
  - Import **duty hike would ensure a "level playing field"** for domestic manufacturers, till they scale up capacity.
- **Recent steps to push domestic API manufacturing:**
  - **Scheme on Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks:** It aims to develop 3 mega Bulk Drug parks in India, in partnership with States, with Grants-in-Aid from Centre to States.
  - **Production Linked Incentive Scheme:** Financial incentive will be given to eligible manufacturers of identified 53 critical bulk drugs on their incremental sales over base year (2019-20) for 6 years.

## ALSO IN NEWS

<p><b>Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pakistan announced resumption of <b>Afghan exports to India through the Wagah border crossing</b> under APTTA.</li> <li>• It is a bilateral trade agreement between Afghanistan-Pakistan signed in 2010.</li> <li>• It <b>provides Afghan traders access to eastern Wagah border with India</b>, where Afghan goods are offloaded onto Indian trucks.</li> <li>• However, <b>APTTA does not allow India's exports to Afghanistan.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Rayalaseema lift irrigation project (RLIP)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently, National Green Tribunal has removed stay on <b>RLIP</b>.</li> <li>• RLIP aims to provide <b>assured water to the entire 19 lakh acres</b>, in four <b>districts of Rayalseema, in Andhra Pradesh.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Rayalaseema region is located in <b>south west region of of Andhra Pradesh.</b> It borders with Tamil Nadu to the south, Karnataka to the west and Telangana to the north.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Project will <b>draw water from Srisailem project</b> which is transported through canal.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ <b>Srisailem Dam</b> is constructed across the <b>Krishna River</b> in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>ATL App Development Module</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is launched under the Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) initiative of NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).</li> <li>• It aims to <b>hone the skills of school students</b> and transforming them <b>from App users to App makers.</b></li> <li>• <b>About AIM:</b> AIM is an initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ AIM is establishing ATLs in schools across India with a vision to <b>Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>India's Tiger Census sets a New Guinness Record</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018</b> entered the Guinness World Record for being the <b>world's largest camera trap wildlife survey.</b></li> <li>• In the survey, camera traps (outdoor photographic devices fitted with motion sensors that start recording when an animal passes by) were placed in 26,838 locations across 141 different sites.</li> <li>• As per the census, released last year, <b>India has an estimated 2967 tigers</b>, accounting for <b>75% of the global tiger population.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Growth Hormone (hGH)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently, Pardeep Singh (2018 Commonwealth Games silver medallist), has been suspended provisionally after his <b>blood sample tested positive for hGH.</b></li> <li>• hGH is <b>produced in the body and secreted by the pituitary gland near the base of the brain.</b> hGH helps in bone, organ and cartilage growth and also helps in repairing damaged muscles.</li> <li>• It is <b>banned both in-competition as well as out-of-competition</b> by World Anti-Doping Agency.</li> <li>• hGH is known to <b>increase muscle mass, strength</b> and tissue-repairing effects etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hope Mars mission</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the <b>first-ever interplanetary mission of UAE</b> that will be launched this week.</li> <li>• <b>Mission will orbit Mars and study the dynamics of the Martian atmosphere</b> and its interaction with outer space and the solar wind.</li> <li>• It will also search for the connection between current Martian weather and the ancient climate of Mars, study the loss mechanisms of Mars' atmosphere to space etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natanz, Iran</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natanz is where <b>Iran's main nuclear facility is located.</b></li> <li>• Recently, a <b>series of unexplained fires and explosions</b> at several places was reported in Iran including at Natanz.</li> </ul>

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