

NTA CANCELS NEET UG 2026 EXAM

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राष्ट्रीय परीक्षा एजेंसी
National Testing Agency
Excellence in Assessment



राष्ट्रीय आयुर्विज्ञान आयोग
NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION

(उच्चतर शिक्षा विभाग, शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के तहत एक स्वायत्त संगठन)
(An Autonomous Organization under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India)

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY**PRESS RELEASE**

Subject: NEET (UG) 2026 — Decision on the Examination of 3 May 2026

Date: 12 May 2026

In continuation of its press release dated 10 May 2026, the National Testing Agency wishes to inform candidates, parents, and members of the public of the following decisions taken in respect of NEET (UG) 2026. NTA had, on 8 May 2026, referred the matters then under consideration to the central agencies for independent verification and necessary action, consistent with its standing commitment to the fair, secure, and credible conduct of the national examinations entrusted to it.

1. On the basis of the inputs subsequently examined by NTA in coordination with the central agencies, and the investigative findings shared by the law enforcement agencies and in order to ensure that there is transparency in the system, **the National Testing Agency, with the approval of the Government of India, has decided to cancel the NEET (UG) 2026 examination conducted on 3 May 2026, and to re-conduct the examination on dates that will be notified separately.**

The inputs received by NTA, taken together with the findings shared by the law enforcement agencies, established that the present examination process could not be allowed to stand. The re-conducted examination dates, along with the re-issued admit-card schedule, will be communicated through the official channels of the Agency in the coming days.

2. **The Government of India has further decided to refer the matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation for a comprehensive inquiry into the allegations therein.** NTA will extend full cooperation to the Bureau and will provide all materials, records, and assistance the inquiry requires.

3. This decision has been taken in the interest of students and in recognition of the trust on which the national examination system rests. The Agency is conscious that re-conduct will cause real and significant inconvenience to candidates and their families. NTA does not take that consequence lightly. The decision has been taken because the alternative would have caused greater and more lasting damage to that trust.

4. The registration data, candidature, and examination centres opted for in the May 2026 cycle will be carried forward to the re-conducted examination. No fresh registration will be required, and no additional examination fee will be levied. In addition, fees already paid, will be refunded to the students and the exam will be re-conducted using NTA's internal resources.

5. Further communications, including the re-conducted examination dates and the re-issued admit-card schedule, will be issued through the official channels of the Agency. Candidates and parents are requested to rely only on these official channels and to disregard unverified reports circulating on social media.

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12/05
Director,

National Testing Agency



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Context:

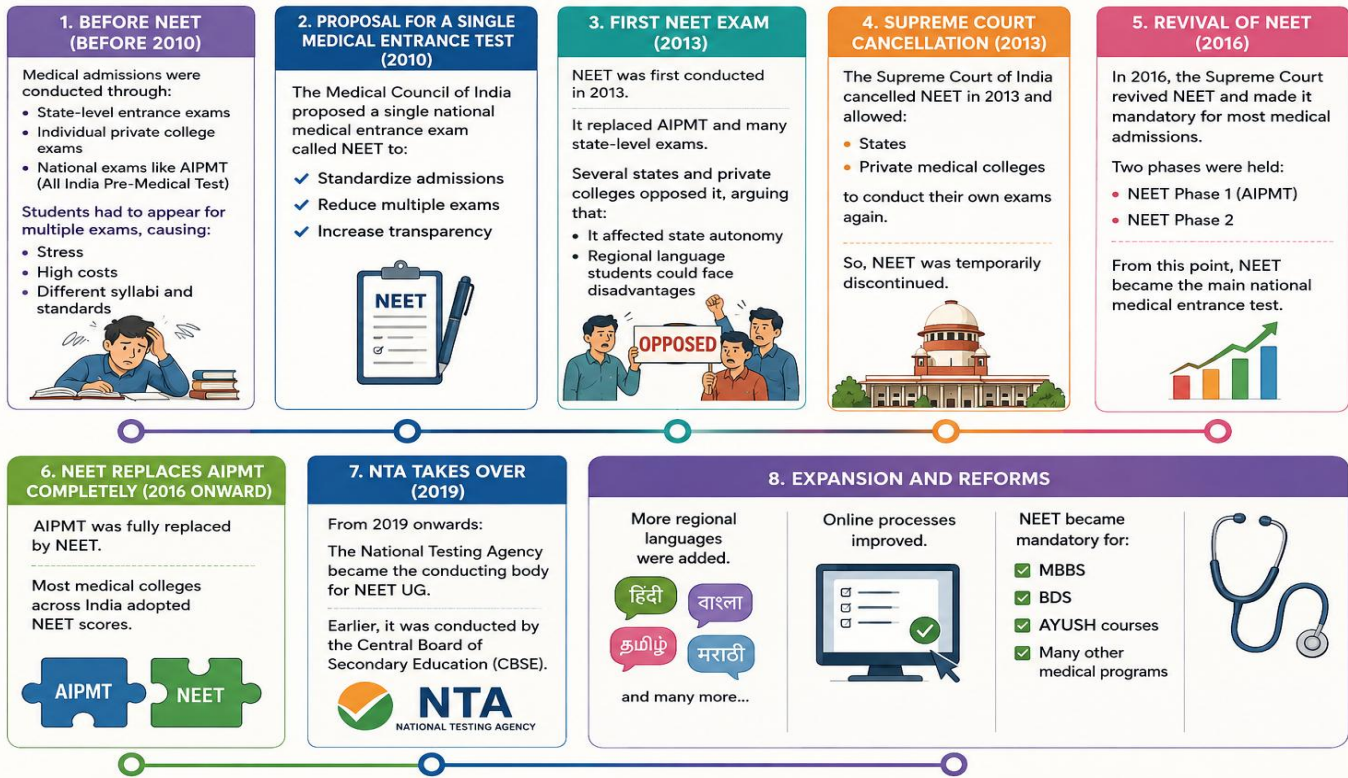
- The **National Testing Agency (NTA)** has cancelled the **NEET-UG 2026** examination conducted on **May 3** after evidence emerged suggesting that the question paper had been leaked.
- More than **22 lakh candidates** who appeared for the **country's biggest undergraduate entrance exam** for entry to **medical courses** will now have to take a **re-test on fresh dates** that are yet to be announced.

**What is the NEET exam?**

- The **National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET)** is a national-level medical entrance examination in India for admission to **undergraduate medical and related courses**.
- **NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY CUM ENTRANCE TEST [NEET (UG) – 2026]** is conducted by **National Testing Agency (NTA)**, as a common and uniform **National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test [(NEET (UG))]** for admission to undergraduate medical education in all medical institutions.
- Similarly, as per **Section 14 of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020**, there shall be a **uniform NEET (UG)** for admission to undergraduate courses in each of the disciplines i.e. **BAMS, BUMS, and BSMS courses of the Indian System of Medicine in all Medical Institutions governed under this Act**.
- **NEET (UG)** shall also be applicable to admission to **BHMS** course as per **National Commission for Homeopathy Act, 2020**.
- The languages in which the **NEET (UG) 2026** would be conducted are: **English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu**.
- **MNS (Military Nursing Service)** aspirants seeking admission to **BSc Nursing Course** being conducted at **Armed Forces Medical Service Hospitals** for the year 2026 are required to **qualify NEET**.
- The **NEET score** will be used for shortlisting for selection to the **four-year BSc Nursing course**.

What is the evolution of the NEET exam in India?

EVOLUTION OF NEET



Evolution	Description
Before NEET (Before 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical admissions were conducted through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State-level entrance exams ○ Individual private college exams ○ National exams like AIPMT (All India Pre-Medical Test) • Students had to appear for multiple exams, causing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stress ○ High costs ○ Different syllabi and standards
Proposal for a Single Medical Entrance Test (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Medical Council of India proposed a single national medical entrance exam called NEET to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standardize admissions ○ Reduce multiple exams ○ Increase transparency
First NEET Exam (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET was first conducted in 2013. • It replaced AIPMT and many state-level exams. • Several states and private colleges opposed it, arguing that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It affected state autonomy ○ Regional language students could face disadvantages

Supreme Court Cancellation (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Supreme Court of India cancelled NEET in 2013 and allowed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ States ○ Private medical colleges ○ to conduct their own exams again. ● So, NEET was temporarily discontinued.
Revival of NEET (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2016, the Supreme Court revived NEET and made it mandatory for most medical admissions. ● Two phases were held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NEET Phase 1 (AIPMT) ○ NEET Phase 2 ● From this point, NEET became the main national medical entrance test. ● NEET Replaces AIPMT Completely (2016 onward) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AIPMT was fully replaced by NEET. ○ Most medical colleges across India adopted NEET scores.
NTA Takes Over (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● From 2019 onwards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The National Testing Agency became the conducting body for NEET UG. ○ Earlier, it was conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).
Expansion and Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More regional languages were added. ● Online processes improved. ● NEET became mandatory for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MBBS ○ BDS ○ AYUSH courses ○ Many other medical programs

What is the National Testing Agency (NTA)?

- **National Testing Agency (NTA)** has been established as a **premier, specialist, autonomous and self-sustained testing organization** to conduct entrance examinations for **admission/fellowship in higher educational institutions.**
- To assess **competence of candidates for admissions** has always been a challenge in terms of matching with **research based international standards, efficiency, transparency and error free delivery.**
- The **National Testing Agency** is entrusted to address all such issues using best in **every field, from test preparation, to test delivery and to test marking.**
- The **National Testing Agency (NTA)** conducts **major national-level entrance exams for higher education in India**, including **JEE Main, NEET-UG, CUET (UG & PG), UGC NET, CSIR NET, and CMAT.**
- These tests are for **engineering, medical, management, pharmacy, and university admission/fellowship purposes.**

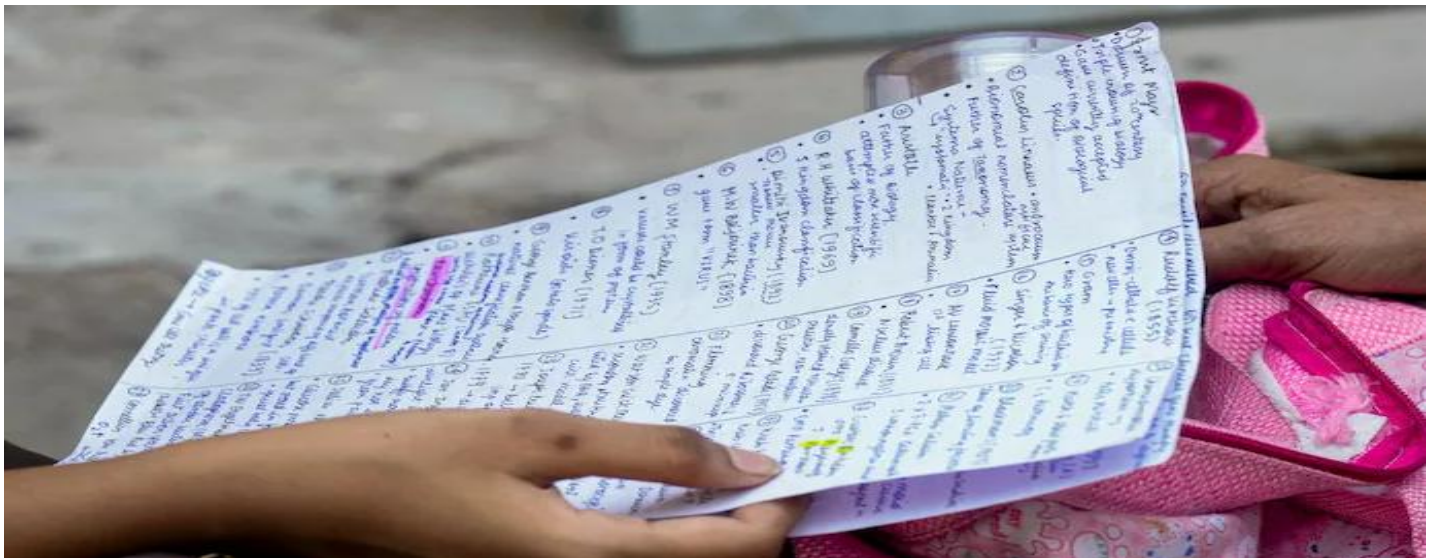
Objectives of NTA

- To conduct **efficient, transparent and international standards** tests in order to assess the competency of candidates for admission purposes.
- To undertake research on **educational, professional and testing systems to identify gaps** in the knowledge systems and take steps for bridging them.
- To identify **experts and institutions in setting examination** questions.

What happened during NEET-UG 2026 on May 3?

- The **NEET-UG 2026 examination was held on May 3** across India and selected international centres for **over 24 lakh aspirants**. It is India’s **largest medical entrance exam** for MBBS, BDS, and allied undergraduate medical courses.
- The NTA maintained that the exam was conducted **under strict security arrangements**, including:
 - **GPS-tracked transport of question papers**
 - **Biometric verification of candidates**
 - **AI-assisted CCTV surveillance**
 - **Deployment of 5G jammers at examination centres**
- At the time of conduct, authorities had stated that the exam proceeded smoothly across all centres without disruption.
- However, within days, concerns began emerging about possible irregularities linked to **question paper circulation** before the exam.

What is the alleged “guess paper” controversy?



- One of the central triggers behind the cancellation was the alleged circulation of a **“guess paper”** containing over 400 questions before the examination.
- Investigators from **Rajasthan Police’s Special Operations Group (SOG)** claimed that:
 - A question **set of around 400+ questions** began circulating days before the exam

- A question set of around 400+ questions began circulating days before the exam
- **Around 100+ questions matched the NEET-UG 2026 paper**
- The overlap was particularly significant in **Biology and Chemistry**
- Officials described the material as a “guess paper”, though they did not rule out organised malpractice or a **structured leak network**.
- A senior official stated: “There is a guess paper containing approximately 410 questions.
 - Out of these 410 questions, **it is alleged that roughly 120 questions actually appeared in the Chemistry section** of the exam.”
- Another key allegation was that nearly **25% of the circulated material matched the actual exam paper**, raising concerns about systemic compromise.

What is the timeline of the NEET 2026 paper leak?**NEET 2026 PAPER
LEAK TIMELINE****NEET 2026 Alleged Leak****1 MAY**

A Kerala MBBS student sent a handwritten "question bank" to Sikar friend in Rajasthan.

2 MAY

Sikar PG operator shared it with students; it spread further.

3 MAY

PG operator complained to NTA and Udyog Nagar police.

6-7 MAY

Students claimed the "question bank" matched the real paper.

7 MAY

NTA said it got leak inputs 4 days after exam; Rajasthan, Uttarakhand flagged.

8 MAY

NTA handed probe to central agencies.

10 MAY

Rajasthan SOG launched investigation.

BY 12 MAY

13 arrests made in Sikar region.

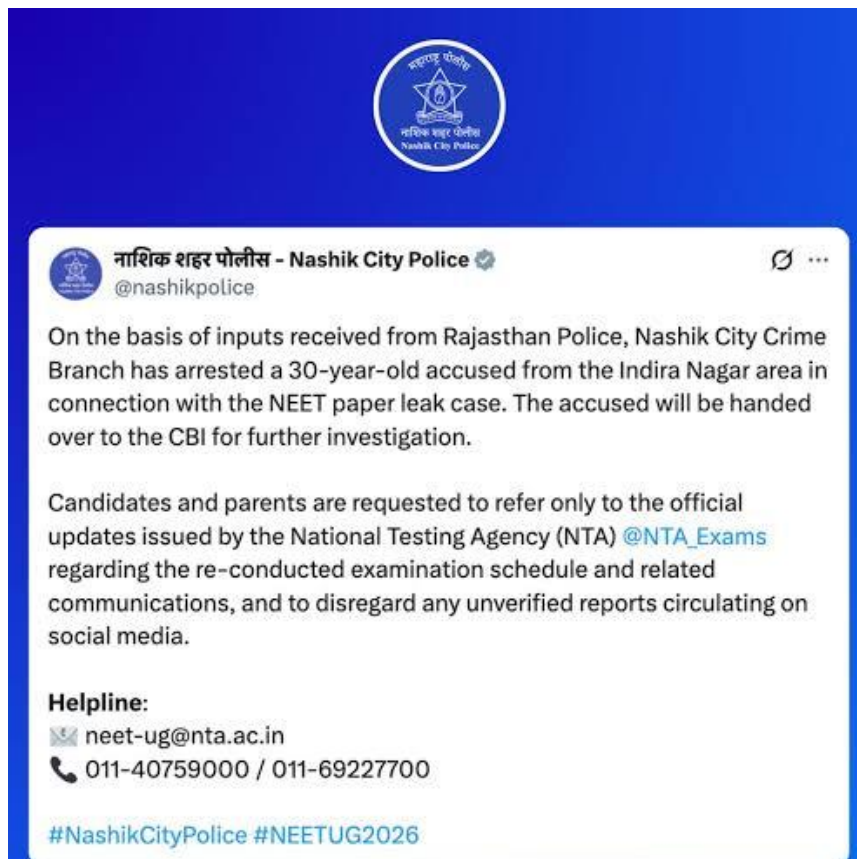
KEY CLAIM

300+ handwritten Physics, Chemistry, Biology questions; same handwriting throughout.

How did the alleged NEET paper leak circulate?

- As per a **TOI report**, investigations suggest the alleged leak followed a multi-state circulation network involving coaching hubs and intermediaries.
- **Preliminary findings indicate:**
 - The question bank may have originated from a medical student from **Churu, Rajasthan, studying in Kerala.**
 - The material was allegedly sent to **an associate in Sikar on May 1.**
 - It then moved through a **Paying Guest (PG) accommodation network.**
 - **Coaching operators and intermediaries** allegedly circulated it further.
- Authorities are examining whether the material was sold at varying prices, reportedly:
 - Up to **Rs 5 lakh two days before** the exam
 - Around **Rs 30,000 on the eve of the examination**
- Investigators also recovered **digital evidence** marked **“Forwarded many times”**, suggesting repeated circulation across messaging platforms.

What role did Rajasthan and Uttarakhand play in the investigation?



- Rajasthan and Uttarakhand emerged as key states in the **early phase of the probe.**
- Authorities traced the suspected circulation route through:
 - **Sikar, Rajasthan:** a major coaching hub
 - **Dehradun, Uttarakhand:** another suspected link in the network
- Officials stated that the alleged “guess paper” moved across states before reaching aspirants through coaching-linked networks.

- TOI reported that **Rajasthan SOG Director General Anand Srivastava** said preliminary findings suggested a **significant overlap between the circulated question material** and the NEET-UG 2026 exam paper, thereby intensifying suspicions of organised malpractice.

When did authorities suspect something was wrong?

- According to official timelines:

May 3	NEET-UG 2026 conducted nationwide
May 7	NTA received suspicious inputs regarding possible question pre-circulation
May 8	Information escalated to central agencies for verification

- Even as investigations began, the NTA initially maintained that the examination process itself had been conducted normally.
- However, as **more evidence surfaced**, coordination between central agencies and state police intensified.

What action did the NTA take before cancelling the exam?

- The **NTA stated** that it acted after receiving verified inputs from law enforcement agencies.
- The agency said: **“The present examination process could not be allowed to stand.”**
- It further emphasised that the decision was necessary to maintain **fairness and public trust** in the national examination system.
- Key administrative decisions included:
 - **Cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 (May 3 exam)**
 - **Referral of the case to the CBI**
 - **Decision to conduct a fresh examination**
 - **Assurance that no new registration or fees would be required**
- The NTA also clarified that **all candidature data** and exam centre preferences would **remain valid for the re-examination**.

What role did the Nashik-based student play in the alleged NEET paper leak before the examination?



- The National Testing Agency (NTA) cancelled the NEET UG 2026 examination on Tuesday for over **22 lakh students after reports** emerged that the question paper had been leaked before the test.
 - The scandal reportedly began in **Maharashtra's Nashik, where the first digital copy of the paper surfaced..**
- According to reports, **Shubham Khairnar, a resident of Nashik**, was detained by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for allegedly purchasing the leaked paper from a Pune-based suspect and later **selling it at a profit margin of Rs 5 lakh.**
- After Maharashtra, the leaked paper reportedly spread to several states, including **Haryana's Gurugram, Rajasthan's Jaipur and Sikar - a major coaching hub - as well as Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Kerala.**
- Shubham Khairnar, a 30-year-old resident of the Indiranagar locality in Nashik, is a Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) student.
 - He allegedly **bought** the leaked NEET UG paper from a Pune-based suspect for **Rs 10 lakh and sold it to a buyer in Haryana for Rs 15 lakh**, earning a profit of Rs 5 lakh.
 - Reports said the paper was circulated through an encrypted messaging application.
- Shubham was detained by the CBI on Tuesday afternoon while reportedly travelling to a temple for prayers. Investigators said he had changed his appearance by **cutting his hair in an attempt to evade detection.**
- However, officials allegedly identified him by **comparing his current appearance with older photographs** and using technical surveillance data.
- After the **Local Crime Branch (LCB) took him into custody**, his father, Madhukar Khairnar, termed the allegations against his son as baseless.
 - According to him, Shubham had no connection with the **paper leak racket.**
 - However, he also said that if his son's name had surfaced in the investigation, **a fair and thorough probe should be conducted to establish the truth.**

How The Leak Origins Were Traced To Maharashtra

- According to reports, the paper was being **circulated nearly 45 hours** before the examination.
- The matter first came to light when a student from Sikar studying in Kerala allegedly sent a **PDF of a "guess paper" to his father**, who runs a **PG accommodation facility in Sikar.**
- The father reportedly **tried to share the paper with girls staying at the hostel** on the morning of the examination, but they had already left for their centres.
- After the exam concluded, the **paper was shown to Chemistry and Biology teachers, who allegedly found that 45 out of 108 Chemistry questions and 90 out of 204 Biology questions** matched the actual exam paper.
- Sources claimed that some coaching institutes in Sikar asked select students to prepare for **NEET using these so-called "guess papers".**
 - While some aspirants received **PDF copies**, others were reportedly given **physical copies** of the leaked paper.
- The **teachers initially attempted to file a complaint**, but the Sikar police allegedly refused to register it.
 - **They later emailed the NTA**, which reportedly **informed the Intelligence Bureau (IB).**
 - The IB then directed **Rajasthan's Special Operations Group (SOG)** to investigate the matter.

- On May 8, the **SOG reportedly identified individuals in Sikar** who had purchased the paper from Jaipur and later traced the network to Haryana and Nashik.

What investigations and arrests have been made so far?

- The **Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG)** has expanded its investigation across multiple states.
- So far, actions include:
 - Over **20 individuals detained**
 - 13 arrests in Rajasthan-related operations
 - Searches in Sikar, Jhunjhunu, and Dehradun
 - **Questioning of coaching operators and intermediaries**
- One suspect was reportedly found in **possession of the question set as early as April 30**, three days before the exam.
- Authorities are also examining links to:
 - Dummy candidate rackets
 - Solver gangs
 - Coaching-linked consultancy networks
- Former officials of the **Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC)** have also been questioned in related examination fraud investigations, as broader concerns about **organised leak networks continue to surface**.

What happens next for NEET-UG aspirants?

- Following the cancellation, the NTA has confirmed that:
 - **The NEET-UG 2026 exam will be re-conducted**
 - **Fresh dates will be announced separately**
 - **No new registration will be required**
 - **No additional fee will be charged**
 - **Previously paid fees will be refunded**
 - **Existing application and exam centre preferences remain valid**
- The agency also confirmed that the **re-examination will be conducted using its internal resources**, with **updated scheduling and admit cards to follow**.
- The NTA has said a **fresh NEET-UG 2026** examination will be conducted in the “**minimal possible time**”, although no official date has been announced yet.
- **Revised exam dates and fresh admit cards** are expected to be notified through official channels in the coming days.
- Students have been advised **not to rely on rumours** circulating on social media.
- The agency clarified that **no fresh application will be required**. Existing registrations, candidature details and examination city preferences will automatically be carried forward to the re-test.
- **No additional examination fee** will be charged, and the NTA has also promised to refund fees already paid by candidates.
- The uncertainty around the re-exam has left many students anxious.

Divya, a Bengaluru-based aspirant, questioned the authorities over repeated paper leak allegations. She said stricter safeguards should have been put in place after the 2024*

controversy. "In 2024, when the paper leaked, they didn't cancel the exam, but in 2025, they made the paper tougher. It's not just about making the paper tough; they should make sure that it does not leak," she said, adding, "There's no point in making the paper tough" if the integrity of the exam cannot be ensured.

- The NEET 2026 controversy comes **two years after a similar paper leak controversy in 2024**, when demands for a re-test were rejected by the Union government and the Supreme Court.
- At the time, the Union government maintained that **there was no evidence of a large-scale breach**.
- This time, the **NTA itself concluded** that the examination process had been compromised.
- Students have also questioned **why repeated leaks continue despite additional safeguards** introduced after 2024, including biometric verification, GPS-enabled transport of question papers and police escort for examination materials.

Another NEET aspirant, Sapna, who had been preparing for the examination for the last two years, said the sudden cancellation of the exam had left students anxious and uncertain about their future. "It feels a bit stressful, and I don't know when we will have the re-test as well and when the results will come." The uncertainty has thrown her plans into disarray. "We had already planned other options based on my marks. Now we are confused about whether to go forward with them."*

What has happened earlier with allegations of paper leaks?

- Considering the scale of the NEET-UG exam, allegations of malpractices and paper leaks surface each year.
- NEET-UG, however, **has never been cancelled before**. In 2024, there was a **clamour among students and Opposition party leaders to cancel the exam** and conduct a retest after a paper leak in Jharkhand.
- The CBI inquiry into **the case had later revealed that candidates paid to get solved papers** hours before the exam, with an exam centre coordinator in Jharkhand being involved in the leak.
- While petitions in the **Supreme Court** called for a cancellation of the exam, the court **refused demands for a retest** noting that material on record "is **not indicative of a systemic leak of the question paper which would indicate a disruption of the sanctity of the examination.**"
- The court did, however, note that the fact that the leak of the NEET-UG paper took place in **Hazaribagh in Jharkhand, and in Patna, Bihar, is not in dispute**.
- Despite furor over the exam, the Centre had also doubled down then on not conducting a retest.
- The Education Ministry had maintained that there was no large-scale breach of confidentiality, and **Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** had said then that the country **should not hold the future of many candidates from rural areas hostage for "some isolated incidents."**
- In 2024, NEET-UG results were initially announced in June.
- A re-test was conducted for **1563 candidates who were given 'grace marks' for 'loss of time' during the exam**, and revised results were declared in July.
- That year, the UGC-NET was cancelled a day after it was held on the grounds that the paper may have been **leaked on the darknet**. **CSIR-UGC NET and NEET-PG** were also postponed.

When was the last time a medical entrance exam was cancelled?

- In 2015, on the orders of the Supreme Court, the **All India Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Test (AIPMT)**, which was held by the CBSE, was cancelled.
- That year, petitions before the Supreme Court called for the cancellation of the exam on the **grounds that electronic devices** were used by candidates to access answer keys during the exam.
- In **Haryana’s Rohtak**, the police had **intercepted a car with four suspects** who were found with **vests tagged with micro SIM and Bluetooth devices**, and answer keys were found on some of their phones.
 - The Haryana police had told the court then that **44 candidates were found to have benefitted from the answer keys**.
- The **court then ordered** that the exam be cancelled and a **re-test** be held in four weeks.
- **NEET-UG replaced AIPMT in 2016**.
- While it was initially conducted by the CBSE, the **NTA began conducting the exam in 2019**.

What measures did the Education Ministry and NTA put in place after the 2024 leak?

STRING OF CONTROVERSIES

2024 Paper Leak And Malpractice Allegations of a paper leak emerged in **Patna**, where candidates reportedly paid between **₹30L and ₹50L** for advance access to questions

➤ In **Godhra**, a teacher was accused of helping students fill in OMR sheets for a fee

➤ ‘Incorrect distribution’ of papers occurred at a centre in **Rajasthan’s Sawai Madhopur**

’24 Result Irregularities Results saw unprecedented **67 students achieving perfect scores (720/720)**, which was later reduced to 17 after SC disallowed

marks for a controversial physics question based on an old textbook error

➤ **Students also received ‘mathematically impossible’ scores of 718 and 719** due to **compensatory ‘grace marks’** awarded for lost time, which were later withdrawn

2026 ‘guess paper’ leak A controversy erupted when a **‘guess paper’ circulating in Rajasthan allegedly matched nearly 600 marks** worth of questions from that 720 marks of actual exam. This led to eventual cancellation of exam



SFI members being detained on Tuesday during a protest at Shastri Bhawan in Delhi against the NEET exam paper leak

- The chaos surrounding **NEET-UG in 2024** broke out right around the time that the **BJP-led government stepped in for a third term**.
- The Centre had then set up a **seven-member committee** headed by **former ISRO chief K. Radhakrishnan** to recommend measures for the smooth conduct of these exams.
 - The committee **submitted its recommendations** to the **Education Ministry** at the end of 2024.

- It drew **parallels with the conduct of elections and proposed a similar mechanism** to ensure the security of public exams.
- The committee recommended that **testing centres should be sealed in the presence of the district administration and police, and guarded till they are unsealed for the exam**, in the presence of the district administration and NTA officials.
- It also recommended that the **NTA collaborate with the state** and district administrations in conducting these exams.
- The committee had also pointed to **computer-based testing with exams in multiple shifts** as the preferred mode of examination. NEET-UG is held in pen-and-paper mode.
- This year's NEET exam and last year's were held after some of these recommendations had been implemented.
 - For instance, the NTA has **been collaborating with district administrations** to ensure the **security of testing centres and exam material**.
 - **Biometric verification of candidates** was conducted, and exam material was transported in GPS-enabled vehicles with police escort.
 - **CCTV surveillance at exam centres** was accompanied by a centralised monitoring system at the NTA headquarters in Delhi.

What are various renewed demands for virtual examination?

- The latest controversy has **revived demands** for major **structural reforms** in the examination process.
- The **Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA)** has moved the Supreme Court seeking **restructuring or replacement of the NTA** and has demanded that the **re-examination be conducted under judicial supervision**.
- The petition also seeks a **shift to computer-based testing (CBT) and digital locking of question papers** to reduce the risk of leaks during physical transportation.
- However, NTA Director General **Abhishek Singh** said **moving NEET entirely online would be a massive logistical exercise** because nearly 22 lakh students appear for the exam every year, while **existing infrastructure can handle only around 1.5 lakh candidates per day**.
- He added that the NTA **would review recommendations** made by an expert committee constituted after the 2024 controversy to identify what went wrong this year despite enhanced security measures.

Enlist some of the major examination scams of India?

MAJOR PAPER LEAKS IN INDIA

1. AIPMT 2015

Medical entrance exam cancelled after cheating racket exposed.

2. SSC CGL 2017

Leak allegations triggered nationwide protests by aspirants.

3. CBSE EXAMS 2018

Class 10 Maths and Class 12 Economics papers leaked.

4. REET 2021

Rajasthan teacher eligibility exam scrapped over leak claims.

5. UPTET 2021

UP teacher eligibility test cancelled hours before exam.

6. BIHAR RECRUITMENT EXAMS 2023

Multiple exams hit by leak and cheating allegations.

7. NEET-UG 2024

Medical entrance exam rocked by leak and grace-mark row.

8. UGC-NET 2024

Exam cancelled a day later over integrity concerns.

9. UP POLICE EXAM 2024

Recruitment test scrapped after alleged statewide leak.

Exams	Description
Vyapam Scam (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vyapam, the Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board, was tasked with carrying out large-scale competitive exams for entry to various technical courses and recruitment to government employment. ● The fraud included 13 separate exams administered by Vyapam. ● Although the premium began from Rs 15 lakh for PMT, it was more than Rs 50 lakh for admission to PG (Medical). ● Since 2010, more than 40 doctors, medical students, policemen and civil servants with links to the Vyapam scam have died in mysterious circumstances.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What were the actions taken after Vyapam scam:- ● CBI Investigation: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took over the probe into the Vyapam scam following a directive from the Supreme Court in 2015. ● More than 2,000 suspects were detained in connection with the fraud. This included former Minister of Education, Laxmikant Sharma, and more than a hundred other lawmakers. ● On 13 February 2017, the Supreme Court of India delivered an 83-page judgment and canceled the degrees of 634 doctors.
<p>SSC CGL paper leak Scam 2017</p>	<p>SSC CGL paper leak Scam 2017:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Following the paper leak allegations, the Paper I conducted on February 21,2018 was canceled by the Commission on account of ‘technical issues’. <p>Student Protest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was reported that screenshots of the question paper along with the answers went viral on social media much before the exam was over. ● Thousands of candidates protested outside the SSC office at Lodhi Road, New Delhi,demanding a CBI inquiry into the paper leak issue. <p>Action taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SSC accepted demands of protesting candidates and had given orders for a CBI inquiry. <p>Eventually SSC took following steps:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCTV Surveillance: Enhanced exam hall monitoring with live and recorded CCTV footage to deter cheating. ● TCS iON Partnership: Collaborated with TCS iON for secure, technology-driven online exam solutions. ● Biometric Registration: Implemented biometric checks (fingerprints, Iris scan) at centers to prevent impersonation. ● Question Paper Randomization: Utilized technology to ensure each candidate receives a uniquely ordered question set. ● Strengthened Invigilation: Increased invigilator presence and stricter protocols to swiftly address exam hall issues.
<p>Rajasthan Teacher Recruitment 2022 leak</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) member Babulal Katara was arrested.Police said Babulal Katara handed over the questions to suspended government school vice-principal Anil Kumar Meena for Rs 60 lakh.) ● CBI special court in Hyderabad has sentenced Railway Recruitment Board - Mumbai chairman Satendra Mohan Sharma and nine others to five years' rigorous imprisonment in connection with the leak of exam papers for the recruitment of 1,936 assistant loco pilot 2010. ● Former DAV Public School principal, two others convicted for leaking CPT exam papers in 2007.

What are the major causes behind examination paper leaks in India?

Major Causes	Description
Insider Involvement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inadequate digital security enables unauthorized access to exam papers. ● The CBSE paper leak in 2018 highlighted vulnerabilities in the digital handling and storage of question papers. Mathematics and economics papers for class 10th and 12th were leaked directly from the official portal with the help of an insider and spread via whatsapp.
High Student to seats ratio:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the AIPMT (All India Pre-Medical Test) leak in 2015, answer keys were circulated using electronic devices. ● Whereby, students tried to cheat for seats in Medical colleges where otherwise they could only get in on merit . ● Even if they could get a seat in other medical colleges , that too would have cost them in lakhs.
Lack of Effective Regulation and Oversight:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The SSC (Staff Selection Commission) exam scandal in 2017 involved allegations of paper leak, pointing to inadequate regulatory measures to ensure the integrity of competitive exams.
Corruption and Lack of Accountability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mentioned Vyapam scam is also a stark example of corruption, where the systematic manipulation of exam processes was covered up for years without significant early accountability.
Poor Infrastructure and Process Management:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The repeated leaks in the Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) exams over the years have often been attributed to poor management and infrastructure, including instances where question papers were sold openly before the exams.

What are some international examples of Paper leaks and use of unfair means?

South Korea - SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) Cancellation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2013, South Korea canceled its scheduled SAT exams nationwide after discovering that questions from upcoming tests had been leaked. ● The leak was linked to private tutoring centers.
United States - SAT and ACT Scandals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The United States has seen multiple incidents involving the SAT and ACT college entrance exams. ● One notable case is the 2011 cheating scandal in Long Island, New York, where students paid others to take the SAT for them. ● In 2019 "Operation Varsity Blues" scandal revealed a complex scheme where wealthy parents paid to fraudulently boost their children's SAT scores and college admissions prospects, leading to widespread scrutiny and calls for reform in college admissions.

Algeria - Baccalaureate Exam Leaks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algeria has faced significant issues with its Baccalaureate exams (high school leaving exams). In 2016, the government temporarily blocked access to social media sites nationwide to prevent cheating, after exam papers were leaked online.
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What is the Exam cancellation frequency in Central Vs State govt. exams ?

States	Center
Rajasthan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 2015 and 2023, the state witnessed more than 14 cases of question paper leaks of various competitive exams. 	Center exams before 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSC CGL leaked in 2017. AIPMT leaked in 2014
Uttar Pradesh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight incidents of question paper leaks between 2017 and 2022. Inspectors Online Recruitment Test (2017), Teacher Eligibility Test (UPTET) (2021), Preliminary Eligibility Test (2021), B.Ed Joint Entrance Examination (2021) 	Center exams post 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are three major recruiting agencies of Central Government i.e. Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs). No leakage of question papers has been reported in the examinations conducted by these three agencies since June 2019
Gujarat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state has witnessed 14 such incidents of question paper leaks in the last seven years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UGC NET 2021 Paper leak.
Karnataka, Bihar, UP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police recruitment exam 	

A DETAILED PLAN TO CHEAT

Pics: Sunil Parmuwal



PORTABLE DEVICE: Battery-powered device with a SIM card that can receive and make calls with a single button

N95 MASK: Portable device fitted into N95 masks which can be used for conversations

EARPIECE: Small brown-coloured earpiece which fits deep into ears and cannot be spotted easily



Has the UPSC exam ever been canceled ? What about state PCS exams ?

- The Civil Services (Preliminary) Exam 1991 was scheduled to be held on 9th June, 1991.
- The examination was, however, canceled due to the leakage of the question paper before the exam.
- Investigations carried out by the CBI, identified the source of leakage as the printing press located at Ranchi.

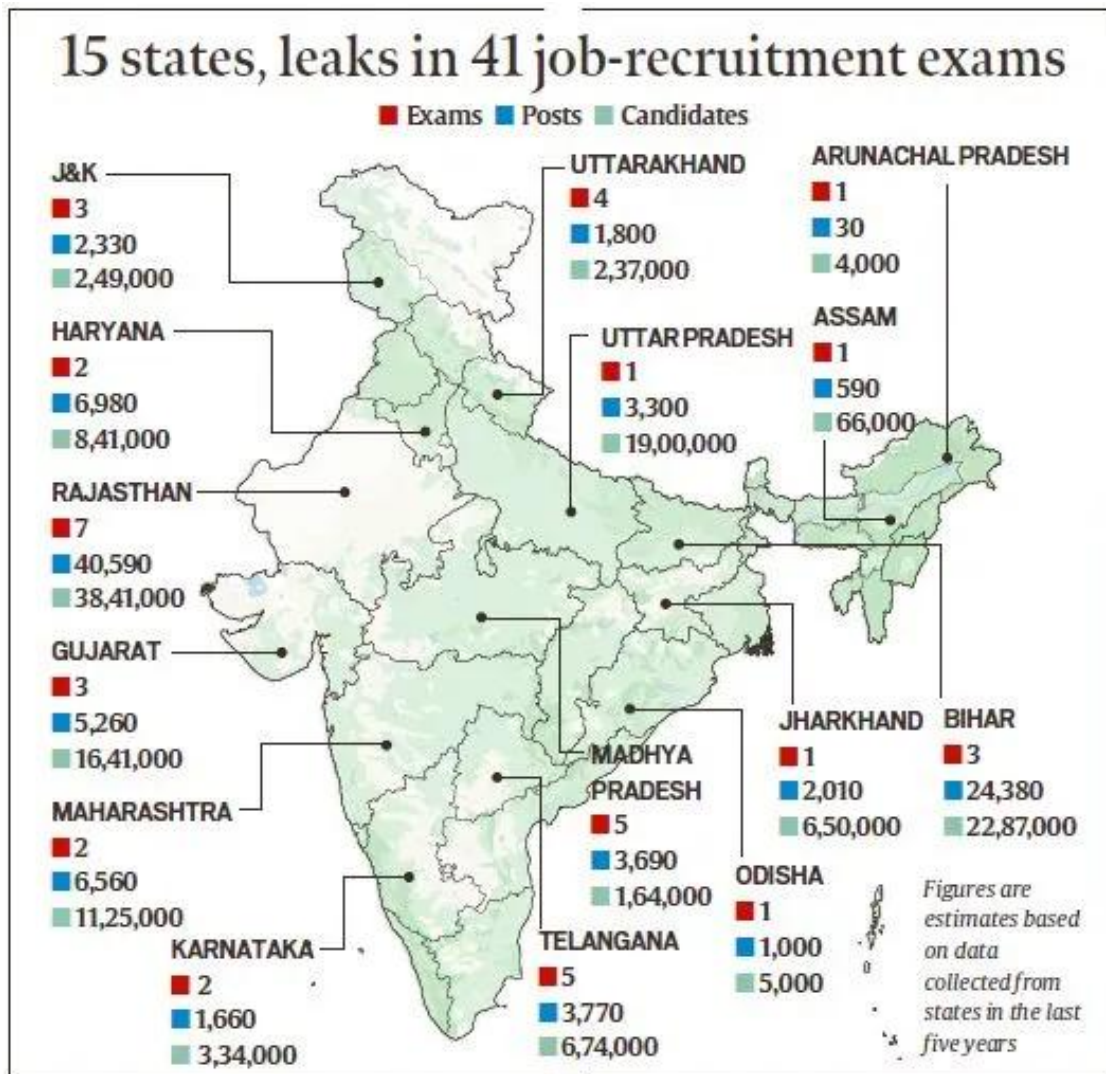
- The reexamination was held on **29th September 1991**.
- **IPS officer Safer Karim** was caught cheating in the UPSC mains exam in **2017** with the help of wife via bluetooth headset.

Status of State PCS exams:-

- The UPPCS prelims exam was leaked in 2015.
- MPPSC 2012 Pre and mains leaked.
- Haryana HCS Judiciary 2017 Paper leak
- Orissa OSSC - JE civil exam paper leak.

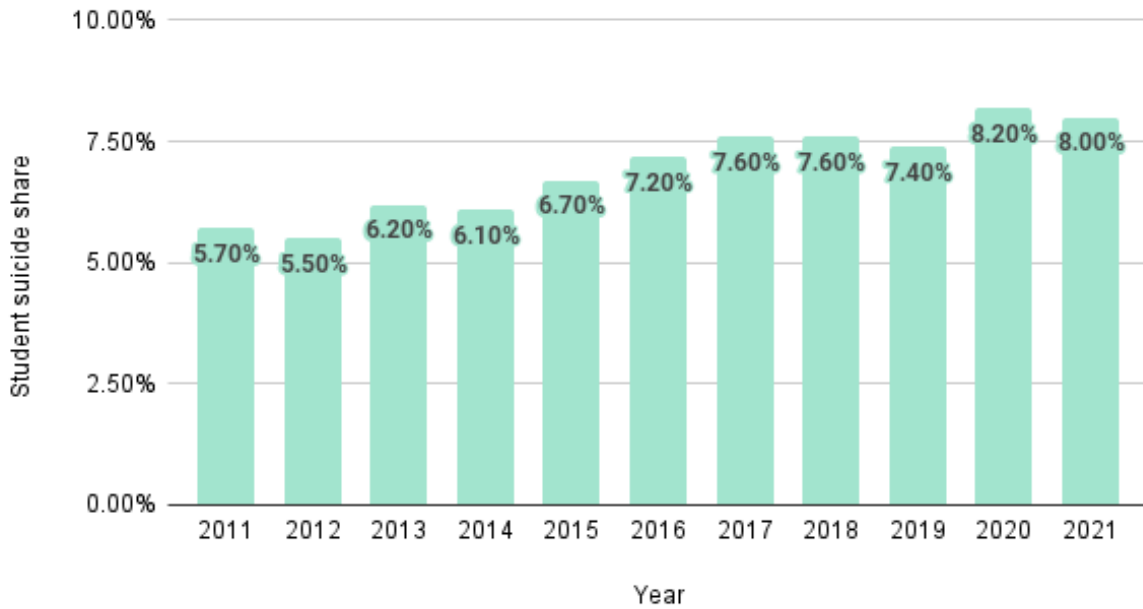
What is the impact on the career of students due to the practice of such unfair means?

- According to estimates, in the last seven years, more than **1.5 crore students** have been affected by the numerous question paper leaks that happened in various states.



- There have been more than **70 cases of question paper leaks in the country in the last seven years**, which have affected the future of lakhs of students.

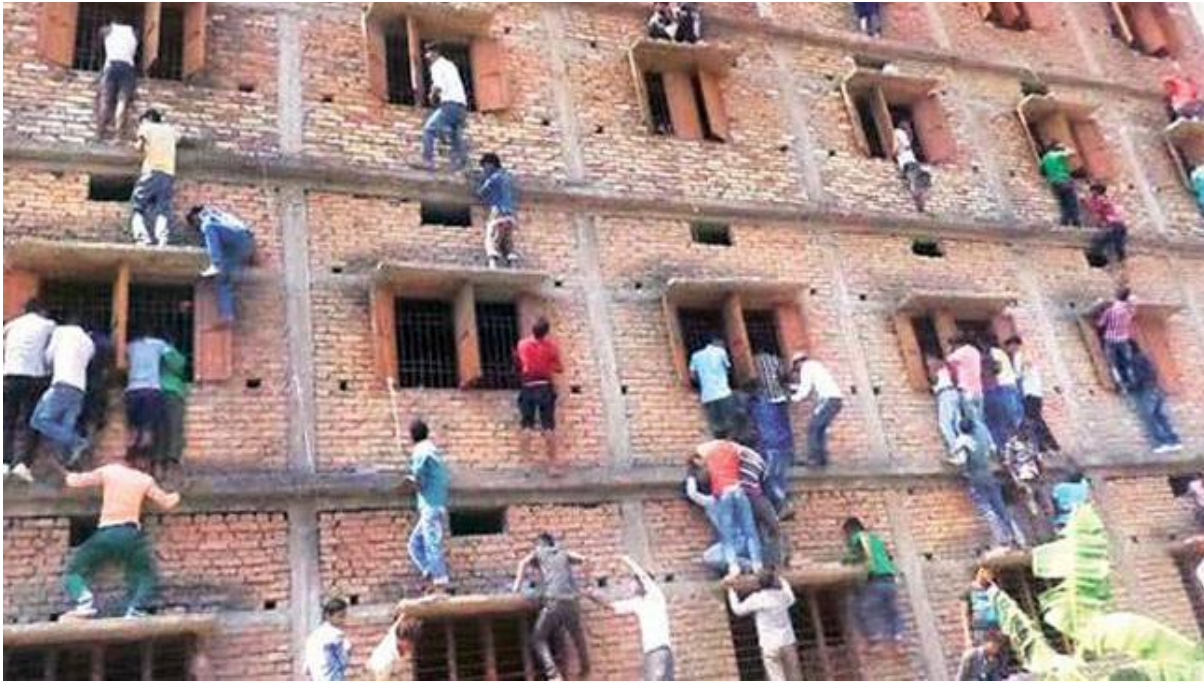
Student suicide share (%)















Mention a few instances when board exam papers been leaked in India?







Instances	Description
CBSE Paper Leak (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the most infamous incidents involved the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in India, where the Class 10 Mathematics and Class 12 Economics exam papers were leaked. This led to widespread outrage among students, parents, and the general public, prompting the CBSE to re-conduct the Class 12 Economics exam.
Bihar State Education Board Leak (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) faced a massive scandal when the Class 10 Science and Class 12 Humanities question papers were leaked. This incident was part of a larger controversy that year, including the infamous "toppers scam," where merit list toppers were found to be unable to answer basic questions related to their subjects.
Haryana Board Paper Leaks (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board of School Education Haryana (BSEH) had multiple instances of question paper leaks, including the Class 10 and 12 board exams.
Maharashtra SSC Board Paper Leak (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE) saw the leak of the Class 10 Science exam paper through social media platforms

“Maine to Papa se kaha tha pass karwa dijiye, unhone ne to top hi karwa diya.” Ruby Rai , 2016 Topper Bihar Board.



Which mode of examination is safer, Online or Offline?

ONLINE EXAMINATIONS		
Advantages	Vulnerabilities	Advanced Security Measures like use of AI to detect irregularities can be used in the future
 <p>Digital literacy (only 40% of the population in the critical age group 15 to 29 years are digitally literate as per NSO report).</p>	 <p>Connectivity problems and glitches can affect exam fairness.</p>	 <p>Secure browsers, biometric verification, and AI proctoring enhance exam integrity.</p>
 <p>Control Over time limit Digital format reduces risk of physical paper leaks.</p>	 <p>Digital Cheating Tools and hacking Sophisticated cheating tools, like AI assistants, present new challenges.</p>	 <p>AI algorithms can analyze behavior patterns, detect anomalies, and flag suspicious activities.</p>
 <p>Flexibility in Scheduling Offers potential to reduce cheating by allowing flexible exam times.</p>	 <p>Access and Equity Concerns Not all students have equal access to required technology or suitable environments to practice mock tests</p>	 <p>AI proctoring with behavior analysis can detect unusual eye movements, multiple faces, or absence.</p>
 <p>Real-time Monitoring Enables immediate action against misconduct through webcam feeds and screen sharing.</p>	 <p>Digital Cheating Tools and hacking Sophisticated cheating tools, like AI assistants, present new challenges.</p>	 <p>AI can generate real-time reports and alerts for suspicious activities for human review.</p>

OFFLINE EXAMINATIONS	
Advantages	Vulnerabilities
 <p>Familiar Environment Ensures fairness by having all students take the exam under similar conditions.</p>	 <p>Unstandardised Benches, weather , other amenities like washrooms. Physical security and distribution challenges can lead to leaks.</p>
 <p>Familiarity with the process of using Pen and Paper. Familiar protocols reduce confusion and anxiety among students and educators.</p>	 <p>Angrez Singh decided to don the disguise of his girlfriend Paramjit Kaur and take the test on her behalf in Amritsar. Easier for individuals to impersonate others without biometric checks.</p>
 <p>Physical Proctoring Invigilators can deter cheating and intervene immediately,as they are already experienced with the usual methods of cheating .</p>	 <p>Mass Cheating in classrooms with lenient invigilators . Organized cheating where groups collaborate with the school staff can occur.</p>

CAUGHT BY TECH

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A student has to download a software from a link sent from university website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Software also records video if any suspicious activity is caught on camera
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ He/She has to pose in front of the device camera with his university photo ID to access question paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proctor assigned to monitor immediately records the act
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In background, the camera clicks his photo every minute during exam and sends it to proctor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One proctor is assigned to monitor 250 students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This is installed on computer/mobile/tablet 	

Mention a few steps taken by the central government in recent years to prevent cheating

National Testing Agency (NTA)

- In 2013 the MHRD constituted a seven member task force to prepare a **blueprint for creating a special purpose vehicle** to take up the concept of **National Testing Agency (NTA)** forward.
- In 2017 an announcement about NTA was made by the **Finance Minister in the budget speech of 2017**.
- National Testing Agency (NTA) has been established as a **premier, specialist, autonomous and self-sustained testing organization** to conduct entrance examinations for admission/fellowship in higher educational institutions

UPSC for the Civil Service Examination

9. Instruction in respect of uploading of Photograph while filling up online application form :-

- (a) The photograph, uploaded by candidate should not be more than **10 days old** from the start of the online application process (i.e. the application commencement date).
- (b) Ensure that **the name of candidate** and the **date on which the photograph was taken** are clearly mentioned on the photograph.
- (c) The candidate's **face** should occupy **3/4th of the space** in the photograph.
- (d) The candidates must ensure that their appearance must match with their photograph at each stage of the Examination Process i.e. at the time of Preliminary, Main (Written) and Interview/Personality Test. For instance, If a candidate uploads a bearded photograph, he must appear with the same look in the Preliminary, Main (Written) and Interview/Personality Test. Same would be the case with spectacles, moustaches, etc.

One Time Registration(OTR)

- **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** has launched 'One Time Registration' (OTR) platform on **24x7 basis on the Commission's official website** upsc.gov.in and upsonline.nic.in to facilitate the process of submission of applications of candidates to be made convenient.

What legal frameworks and penalties exist in different countries to prevent and punish examination paper leaks and cheating in national exams?

Legal frameworks and penalties	Description
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Criminal Law Amendment (9) (2015 Amendment): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ China amended its Criminal Law to include specific provisions against cheating in exams. Article 284 of the amendment stipulates penalties for those who organize cheating in national education examinations, including imprisonment of up to seven years for serious cases.
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regulatory bodies like Ofqual (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) govern the conduct of exams and the actions to be taken in case of malpractice. ● The Fraud Act 2006 is applied in cases of examination fraud, such as impersonation or possession of prohibited materials, under general provisions against fraud by false representation.
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bangladeshi school children as young as 14 caught cheating in final exams can in future be jailed for up to 10 years under a law approved by their parliament. ● Any teacher found guilty of leaking examination questions, falsifying marks or diploma certificates faces the same penalty. The minimum jail term is five years.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The measures apply to offenses committed during the school and college finals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minimum age of a child sitting school finals is 14.
<p>South Korea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act on the Establishment of Order in Taking National Examinations : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Korea has specific legislation aimed at maintaining the integrity of national examinations. This act includes provisions against cheating, impersonation, and the leak of examination materials, with penalties that can include imprisonment and fines. Students caught cheating are disqualified and are imposed a fine up to \$5500 by the court.

How China makes its GAOKAO Exam leak-proof?



GAOKAO IN CHINA: A STUDENT'S JOURNEY FROM ENTRY TO EXIT

One of the world's most secure exams

1 ENTRY GATE

- ID check & facial recognition
- No metal ornaments allowed

2 SECURITY CHECK

- Walk through metal detector & intelligent security gate
- Detects phones, watches, earpieces & more

3 IDENTITY VERIFICATION

- Fingerprint / Iris scan
- Prevent impersonation

4 INSIDE EXAM HALL

- AI camera monitor in real time
- Jammers block signals
- Suspicious behaviour flagged

5 EXAM ENDS

- Answer sheets collected
- Students remain seated till allowed

6 EXIT CHECK

- Another security scan before leaving
- Any suspicious items checked

WHY GAOKAO IS SO SECURE

- PAPERS ARE STATE SECRETS**: Printed in secure facilities (often prisons) under 24/7 surveillance
- ARMED ESCORT & GPS TRACKING**: Question papers transported under police guard with GPS & video monitoring
- MULTI-LAYERED STORAGE**: Steel-reinforced vaults with multiple keys and authorisations
- STRICT LAWS, SEVERE PUNISHMENT**: Cheating can lead to 3-7 years in prison, fines, score cancellation and exam bans
- AI & TECH SURVEILLANCE**: AI cameras, signal jammers, drones and intelligent patrol systems

BEYOND THE EXAM HALL

- DRONES & SWAT PATROLS**: Monitor surroundings and handle any suspicious activity
- AI TOOLS RESTRICTED**: Image recognition tools restricted during exam hours to prevent cheating
- CRACKDOWN ON LEAKS & SCAMS**: Authorities monitor online rumours, fake answers and cheating networks
- INVIGILATORS HELD ACCOUNTABLE**: Strict action against officials for any lapses

CHEATING IS A CRIME

- 3-7 YEARS IN PRISON
- HEAVY FINES
- SCORE CANCELLATION
- LONG-TERM EXAM BANS

ZERO TOLERANCE. ZERO LEAKS. THAT'S THE GAOKAO WAY.

Sources: South China Morning Post (SCMP) | Ohio State University Study | China Daily | Xinhua News Agency | Time Magazine

What are Various Provisions of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 in combating unfair means?



PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS (PREVENTION OF UNFAIR MEANS) ACT, 2024

A STRONG LAW FOR FAIR & TRANSPARENT EXAMINATIONS

An Act to prevent unfair means in public examinations and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.



1 DEFINES PUBLIC EXAMINATION

Under Section 2(k), "public examination" is defined as any examination conducted by a public examination authority listed in the Schedule of the Bill, or any "such other authority as may be notified by the Central Government".



3 UNFAIR MEANS AND OFFENSES

Section 3 of the Bill lists the following actions that amount to using unfair means in public examination done for monetary or wrongful gain include but not be restricted to:-

- Leakage of question paper or answer key or part thereof;
- Participating in collusion with others to effect leakage of question paper or answer key;
- Accessing or taking possession of question paper or an Optical Mark Recognition response sheet without authority;
- Providing solution to one or more questions by any unauthorized person during a public examination;
- Directly or indirectly assisting the candidate in any manner unauthorisedly in the public examination;
- Tampering with answer sheets including Optical Mark Recognition response sheets.
- Altering the assessment except to correct a bona fide error without any authority;
- Willful violation of norms or standards set up by the Central Government for conduct of a public examination on its own or through its agency.
- Tampering with any document necessary for short-listing of candidates or finalizing the merit or rank of a candidate in a public examination.
- Deliberate violation of security measures to facilitate unfair means in conduct of a public examination.
- Tampering with the computer network or a computer resource or a computer system.
- Manipulation in seating arrangements, allocation of dates and shifts for the candidates to facilitate adopting unfair means in examinations.
- Threatening the life, liberty or wrongfully restraining persons associated with the public examination authority or the service provider or any authorized agency of the Government.
- Obstructing the conduct of a public examination.
- Creation of fake websites to cheat or for monetary gain.
- Conduct of fake examination, issuance of fake admit cards or offer letters to cheat or for monetary gain.

No person or group of persons or institutions shall collude or conspire to facilitate indulgence in any such unfair means.

2 EXAMS TO BE COVERED

The Schedule lists five public examination authorities:

- i Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**
Conducts Civil Services Examination, Combined Defence Services Examinations, Combined Medical Services Examination, Engineering Services Examination, etc.
- ii Staff Selection Commission (SSC)**
Recruits for Group C (non-technical) and Group B (non-gazetted) jobs in the central government.
- iii Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs)**
Recruits Groups C and D staff in the Indian Railways.
- iv Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS)**
Hires at all levels for nationalized banks and regional rural banks (RRBs).
- v National Testing Agency (NTA)**
Conducts JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET, CUET, etc.



(vi) Ministries or Departments of the Central Government and their attached and subordinate offices for recruitment of staff" will also come under the purview of the new law.

Apart from these, such other authorities may be notified by the Central Government.

4 INVESTIGATION



An officer not below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police or Assistant Commissioner of Police shall investigate any offense under this Act.

The Central Government shall have the powers to refer the investigation to any Central Investigating Agency.

5 PUNISHMENT

Section 9 of the Act states that all offenses under this Act, shall be cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable.



Any person or persons : resorting to unfair means shall be punished with imprisonment for a term minimum three years which may extend to five years and fine up to ten lakh rupees.



The service provider : shall be punished with imposition of a fine up to one crore rupees and proportionate cost of examination shall also be recovered from them. The service provider shall also be barred from conducting any public examination for a period of four years.



The Director, Senior Management or the persons in-charge: of the service provider firm found involved, he shall be liable for imprisonment for minimum three years that can be extended to ten years and with fine of one crore rupees.



If a service provider who is engaged to provide "support of any computer resource or any material, by whatever name it may be called" for the conduct of the examination can be fined up to Rs 1 crore, along with other penalties.



The Bill provides for harsher punishment in cases of organized paper leaks, where "organized crime" is defined as unlawful activity by a group of persons colluding in a conspiracy "to pursue or promote a shared interest for wrongful gain in respect of a public examination".



The punishment for organized crime will be "imprisonment for a term not less than five years but which may extend to ten years" and a fine "which shall not be less than one crore rupees".

6 PROTECTION TO CANDIDATES

The Bill is aimed at preventing organized gangs and institutions that are involved in unfair means for monetary gains, but it protects candidates from its provisions.



7 HIGH-LEVEL NATIONAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



Establishment of a high-level national technical committee on public examinations.

- The committee is primarily responsible for enhancing the security and integrity of the computerized examination process.
- It will set standards for both IT and physical infrastructure.

8 MODEL DRAFT FOR STATES

While the provisions will be binding for central public examination authorities, the bill will serve as a model draft for states.



9 AMENDMENT TO THE CRIMINAL LAW (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, 1944

Added serial number 6 as An offense punishable under the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.



ZERO TOLERANCE TOWARDS CHEATING. STRICT ACTION AGAINST OFFENDERS. SAFEGUARDING MERIT, ENSURING FAIRNESS AND RESTORING TRUST IN I EXAMINATIONS.



Key Features	Description
Defines Public Examination:-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under Section 2(k), “public examination” is defined as any examination conducted by a public examination authority listed in the Schedule of the Bill, or any “such other authority as may be notified by the Central Government”.
Exams to be covered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The schedule lists five public examination authorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which conducts the Civil Services Examination, Combined Defence Services Examinations, Combined Medical Services Examination, Engineering Services Examination, etc.; (ii) Staff Selection Commission (SSC), which recruits for Group C (non-technical) and Group B (non-gazetted) jobs in the central government; (iii) Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs), which recruit Groups C and D staff in the Indian Railways; (iv) Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS), which hires at all levels for nationalized banks and regional rural banks (RRBs); (v) National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET, the Common University Entrance Test (CUET), etc. (vi) Ministries or Departments of the Central Government and their attached and subordinate offices for recruitment of staff” will also come under the purview of the new law. <p>Apart from these , Such other authorities may be notified by the Central Government.</p>
Unfair Means and Offenses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3 of the Bill lists the following actions that amount to using unfair means in public examination done for monetary or wrongful gain include but not be restricted to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leakage of question paper or answer key or part thereof; Participating in collusion with others to effect leakage of question paper or answer key; Accessing or taking possession of question paper or an Optical Mark Recognition response sheet without authority; Providing solution to one or more questions by any unauthorized person during a public examination; Directly or indirectly assisting the candidate in any manner unauthorisedly in the public examination; Tampering with answer sheets including Optical Mark Recognition response sheets. Altering the assessment except to correct a bona fide error without any authority; Willful violation of norms or standards set up by the Central Government for conduct of a public examination on its own or through its agency. Tampering with any document necessary for short-listing of candidates

	<p>or finalizing the merit or rank of a candidate in a public examination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deliberate violation of security measures to facilitate unfair means in conduct of a public examination. ● Tampering with the computer network or a computer resource or a computer system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manipulation in seating arrangements, allocation of dates and shifts for the candidates to facilitate adopting unfair means in examinations. ● Threatening the life, liberty or wrongfully restraining persons associated with the public examination authority or the service provider or any authorized agency of the Government. ● Obstructing the conduct of a public examination. ● Creation of fake websites to cheat or for monetary gain. ● Conduct of fake examination, issuance of fake admit cards or offer letters to cheat or for monetary gain. (prsindia) ● No person or group of persons or institutions shall collude or conspire to facilitate indulgence in any such unfair means.
<p>Investigation:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An officer not below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police or Assistant Commissioner of Police shall investigate any offense under this Act. ● The Central Government shall have the powers to refer the investigation to any Central Investigating Agency.
<p>Punishment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Section 9 of the Act states that all offenses under this Act, shall be cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable. ● Any person or persons : resorting to unfair means shall be punished with Imprisonment for a term minimum three years which may extend to five years and fine up to ten lakh rupees. ● The service provider : shall be punished with imposition of a fine up to one crore rupees and proportionate cost of examination shall also be recovered from them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The service provider shall also be barred from conducting any public examination for a period of four years. ● The Director, Senior Management or the persons in-charge: of the service provider firm found involved, he shall be liable for imprisonment for minimum three years that can be extended to ten years and with fine of one crore rupees. If a service provider who is engaged to provide “support of any computer resource or any material, by whatever name it may be called” for the conduct of the examination can be fined up to Rs 1 crore, along with other penalties. ● The Bill provides for harsher punishment in cases of organized paper leaks, where “organized crime” is defined as unlawful activity by a group of persons colluding in a conspiracy “to pursue or promote a shared interest for wrongful gain in respect of a public examination”. ● The punishment for organized crime will be “imprisonment for a term”

	not less than five years but which may extend to ten years” and a fine “which shall not be less than one crore rupees”.
Protection to Candidates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bill is aimed at preventing organized gangs and institutions that are involved in unfair means for monetary gains, but it protects candidates from its provisions.
Establishment of a high-level national technical committee on public examinations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee is primarily responsible for enhancing the security and integrity of the computerized examination process. • It will set standards for both IT and physical infrastructure.
Model draft for states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the provisions will be binding for central public examination authorities, the bill will serve as a model draft for states.
Amendment to the Criminal Law (amendment) Ordinance, 1944:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added serial number 6 as An offense punishable under the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.

What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?

- **For Prelims:** National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET), National Testing Agency (NTA), The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, Right To Education Act of 2009, New Education Policy 2020, Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), Early Childhood Care and Education
- **For Mains:** NEET UG Result 2024 Controversy, Arguments in Favour and Against of the New Public Examinations Act, Steps Ahead to Ensure Fair Examination System in India.

SOME PREVIOUS YEARS PRELIMS QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following provisions of the Constitution does India have a bearing on Education? (2012)

1. Directive Principles of State Policy
2. Rural and Urban Local Bodies
3. Fifth Schedule
4. Sixth Schedule
5. Seventh Schedule

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3, 4 and 5 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: (d)

SOME PREVIOUS YEARS MAINS QUESTIONS

1. How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate on your answer. (2020-15 Marks)
2. Rameshwar successfully cleared the prestigious civil services examination and was excited about the opportunity that he would get through the civil services to serve the country. However, soon after joining the services, he realized that things are not as rosy as he had imagined. He found a number of malpractices prevailing in the department assigned to him. For example, funds under various schemes and grants were being misappropriated. The official facilities were frequently being used for personal needs by the officers and staff. After some time, he noticed that the process of recruiting the staff was also not up to the mark. Prospective candidates were required to write an examination in which a lot of cheating was going on. Some candidates were provided external help in the examination. Rameshwar brought these incidents to the notice of his seniors. However, he was advised to keep his eyes, ears and mouth shut and ignore all these things which were taking place with the connivance of the higher-ups. Rameshwar felt highly disillusioned and uncomfortable. He comes to you seeking your advice.
Indicate various options that you think are available in this situation. How would you help him to evaluate these options and choose the most appropriate path to be adopted?
250 words. (2014-20Marks)

SOME QUESTIONS FROM THIS YEAR AND PREVIOUS YEARS INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

- **Board Suman Sharma mam (2025):**
 - Have you heard about NEET controversy (Negative Marks)? What happened exactly? Are you fine with this?
- **Board - B B Swain Sir (2025)**
 - Do they give coaching for exams like NEET or competitive exams?
- **Board - B B Swain Sir (2024)**
 - Why so many incidents of cheating in Uttar Pradesh
- **Board - Sujata Mehta Mam (2019)**
 - Why so mass cheating happens in India?
 - Why is education quality so low till now in Bihar?
- **Board - Sujata Mehta Mam (2019)**
 - There are a lot of cheating cases coming nowadays.
 - Also cases like SSC paper leaks.
 - What do you think about the role of police in such cases?
 - Especially from a law and order perspective?

Q.7 Has the NEET-UG controversy negatively affected genuine aspirants more than culprits?

- (a) YES (b) NO (c) Can't say.

Q.8 Do you think students from rural areas suffer more during exam cancellations and re-tests?

- (a) YES (b) NO (c) Can't say.

Q.9 Should the government create an independent exam security authority for national exams?

- (a) YES (b) NO (c) Can't say.

Q10. Can repeated exam leaks discourage students from trusting India's competitive examination system?

- (a) Yes (b) NO (c) Can't say.

