



AIPPM



Addressing the NEET-UG paper leak crisis and restoring integrity in India's competitive examination system.

BACKGROUND GUIDE

M.C.T.M MUN 2026



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Letter from the Executive Board

Dear delegates,

It is our privilege to welcome you to the All India Political Parties Meet (AIPPM) at this conference. As your Executive Board, we look forward to a committee marked by informed debate, careful research, and a genuine effort to find workable, cross-party solutions.

This year's agenda, "Addressing the NEET-UG Paper Leak Crisis and Restoring Integrity in India's Competitive Examination System," concerns a matter of direct consequence to nearly every Indian household with a school- or college-going child, namely, whether the nation's system of high-stakes public examinations can be relied upon to reward merit rather than access to a leaked paper. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for Undergraduates (NEET-UG), which determines admission to India's medical, dental and AYUSH colleges for more than twenty million aspirants each year, has been at the centre of this crisis, though it is by no means the only examination affected. Within a period of little over two years, a question paper leak orchestrated by an inter-state criminal network and enabled by lapses in the National Testing Agency's own custody procedures compelled the Supreme Court to adjudicate the fate of the 2024 examination, while a strikingly similar breach compelled the government to cancel and re-conduct the entire 2026 examination in its entirety.

We expect delegates to represent their assigned party's genuine position, its ideological commitments, and its political interests, whether that is a ruling party defending its record and its reforms, an opposition party pressing for greater parliamentary accountability, or a regional party balancing national debate against the concerns of its own state's students and coaching economy. We encourage you to move beyond blame and toward concrete, implementable measures: examination security and technology, institutional restructuring of the NTA, victim redress for affected candidates, and a legal and investigative framework capable of actually deterring organised leak networks.

Please come prepared, come having read beyond this guide, and come ready to negotiate in good faith.

Warm regards,

The Executive Board,

Madhav Gurumoorthy (Chairperson)

Pranav Kumar (Vice-Chairperson)

Swetha Krishnan (Moderator)

AGENDA: *Addressing the NEET-UG paper leak crisis and restoring integrity in India's competitive examination system*

Introduction

India runs one of the largest examination systems in the world. Every year, tens of millions of students sit for centrally conducted tests that decide entry into medical colleges, engineering institutes, universities, the civil



services, and a wide range of government jobs. NEET-UG alone drew more than twenty-four lakh candidates in both 2024 and 2026, competing for roughly one lakh MBBS seats and a smaller number of dental, AYUSH and allied health seats nationwide. The examination is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), an autonomous body set up in 2017 to centralise and standardise testing functions previously held by individual universities and boards.

That promise of centralisation has instead become a source of concentrated risk. When the NEET-UG 2024 paper was compromised in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh district, the breach was not confined to one town; it called into question the credibility of results nationwide, and the Supreme Court itself acknowledged that the leak was "not in dispute," even as it declined to order a fresh examination. Less than two years later, a similar breach originating with an NTA-linked examiner's coaching class in Pune forced the government to cancel and re-conduct the entire NEET-UG 2026 examination.

In between these two episodes, Parliament passed India's first dedicated central law against examination malpractice, and the government commissioned a high-level expert committee that produced 101 reform recommendations. Yet the 2026 leak occurred after both were already in place, prompting a further amendment bill and a new reform committee. This recurrence, despite legislative and institutional response, is central to the agenda: whether India's examination crisis is fundamentally a problem of law, of technology, of institutional capacity, or of political will.

The ruling NDA points to its new law, its expert committees, and its willingness to debate the issue in Parliament, while noting that leaks have occurred in opposition-governed states as well. The opposition, led by the Indian National Congress and the wider INDIA bloc, argues that isolated legal reform is insufficient without a Joint Parliamentary Committee inquiry and structural change to how the NTA is governed. This committee's task is to examine these competing claims dispassionately and propose measures that protect the integrity of India's examination system regardless of which party governs at the centre or in the states. Delegates are strongly encouraged to build on this guide with their own independent research, particularly into their assigned party's specific statements and voting record on this agenda.

Key Terms

1. **NEET-UG (National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test, Undergraduate):** The single national entrance examination for admission to MBBS, BDS, and AYUSH undergraduate courses in government and private institutions across India, conducted annually by the NTA.
2. **National Testing Agency (NTA):** An autonomous body under the Ministry of Education, established in 2017 to conduct standardised entrance examinations including NEET-UG, JEE (Main), CUET, and UGC-NET, among others.
3. **Paper leak:** The unauthorised, premature disclosure of an examination's question paper (or, in some cases, the answer key) to candidates before or during the scheduled examination, typically for payment.
4. **Solver gang:** A term used by Indian investigators for an organised criminal network that obtains leaked papers, arranges for them to be solved in advance, and sells access to candidates, often operating across multiple states.



5. **Grace marks / normalisation:** Compensatory marks awarded to candidates who lost examination time due to administrative lapses; in NEET-UG 2024 these were awarded to 1,563 candidates and later withdrawn by the Supreme Court after being challenged as an unfair advantage.
6. **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024:** India's first dedicated central legislation criminalising paper leaks and organised examination malpractice, passed by Parliament in February 2024 and brought into force in June 2024.
7. **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026:** A 2026 amendment that increases penalties under the 2024 Act and introduces fast-track special courts, special public prosecutors, and time-bound investigation and trial deadlines.
8. **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):** India's federal investigating agency, which typically takes over major examination leak cases from state police once their inter-state or organised character becomes apparent.
9. **Economic Offences Unit (EOU):** A specialised wing of the Bihar Police that led the initial investigation into the NEET-UG 2024 leak before the case was transferred to the CBI.
10. **Systemic leak:** A legal and evidentiary distinction drawn by the Supreme Court between a leak that is widespread enough to compromise the sanctity of an entire examination, warranting a full re-test, and one that is localised to specific centres or candidates.
11. **Radhakrishnan Committee:** The seven-member High-Level Committee of Experts, chaired by former ISRO chairman Dr K. Radhakrishnan, constituted in June 2024 to recommend reforms to the NTA's examination processes, data security, and institutional structure.
12. **Nilekani Committee:** A high-powered committee under Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani, constituted in 2026 following Supreme Court directions in *Vanshika Yadav v. Union of India*, tasked with recommending the next phase of examination reforms.
13. **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):** A committee comprising members of both Houses of Parliament, cutting across party lines, that can be constituted to conduct a detailed inquiry into a matter of public importance; opposition parties have repeatedly demanded a JPC probe into examination leaks.

Background Information

1. The Structure of India's Competitive Examination Ecosystem

India's examination system operates on an enormous scale. The NTA alone conducts entrance tests for medicine, engineering, central universities, and postgraduate admission, while other central and state bodies run parallel recruitment and board examinations, each with its own, often uneven, security arrangements. A single, centrally prepared NEET-UG question paper must be printed, transported under seal to thousands of centres nationwide, stored securely, and opened simultaneously across the country. Any weak link in that chain, whether a poorly guarded storage room, an unvetted administrator, or an unsecured courier route, can compromise the paper nationwide rather than locally, a structural vulnerability that recent leaks have repeatedly exposed.



2. Case Study — The NEET-UG 2024 Leak: Hazaribagh to Patna

NEET-UG 2024 was conducted on 5 May 2024 for more than twenty-four lakh candidates. Investigators established that the question paper had been stolen from a school in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, hours before the test, and that an inter-state “solver gang,” allegedly led by Sanjeev Kumar Singh (“Sanjeev Mukhiya”), had it solved and distributed to candidates before results were declared on 4 June 2024. The results themselves triggered controversy, with an implausible number of candidates sharing the top rank and a cluster of unusually high scores from a single Patna centre, anomalies the NTA initially attributed to compensatory grace marks that were later annulled by the Supreme Court. Bihar Police’s Economic Offences Unit handed the case to the CBI on 23 June 2024 after making initial arrests, and the investigation subsequently uncovered links to a separate leak of a Bihar state teacher recruitment examination earlier the same year.

3. The Supreme Court’s 2024 Verdict: Leak Without a Full Re-Test

A batch of petitions sought either a nationwide re-conduct of NEET-UG 2024 or targeted remedies for identified beneficiaries. On 23 July 2024, the Supreme Court declined to order a fresh examination, holding that although the paper leak was an admitted fact, the evidence, including CBI findings of roughly 155 beneficiaries confined to Hazaribagh and Patna, did not establish a breach systemic enough to vitiate results for all twenty-four lakh candidates. The Court reasoned that cancellation should remain a measure of last resort, while still criticising the NTA’s conduct of the examination. Critics, including several petitioners and opposition politicians, argued that the 155-beneficiary figure understated the leak’s true scale, since the CBI’s investigation into paper-purchasers was still ongoing at the time of judgment.

4. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

Parliament passed India’s first dedicated central law on examination malpractice in February 2024, months before the NEET-UG leak came to light, and brought it into force on 21 June 2024, the same week the UGC-NET examination was cancelled over a separate leak. The Act criminalises unauthorised access to or leakage of question papers, tampering with examination computer networks, impersonation, and related offences, prescribing prison terms of three to ten years and fines of up to five crore rupees depending on whether the offence is individual or organised. Offences under the Act are cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable, with investigation led by officers of at least Deputy Superintendent rank.

5. The Radhakrishnan Committee and Its Unfinished Implementation

In June 2024, the Ministry of Education constituted a seven-member High-Level Committee of Experts under former ISRO chairman Dr K. Radhakrishnan to recommend reforms to the NTA’s processes, data security, and institutional structure. Submitted in October 2024, its 101 recommendations included a “DIGI-EXAM” biometric identity-verification system, secure printing at the examination centre itself rather than centralised advance transport, and a restructured NTA headed by a Director General with at least 1,000 dedicated secure testing centres. By mid-2026, the government told the Supreme Court that most recommendations had been implemented or were under way, though commentators note that key structural and technological measures, including DIGI-EXAM, remained only partially executed, a gap the 2026 leak exposed.



6. Case Study — The NEET-UG 2026 Leak and Full Cancellation

NEET-UG 2026 was conducted on 3 May 2026. The CBI later established that an NTA-engaged chemistry lecturer in Pune, P.V. Kulkarni, had dictated the paper's questions and answers during a coaching session shortly before the exam, after which handwritten copies were scanned and circulated through coaching networks, reaching hubs such as Sikar in Rajasthan, where access reportedly sold for lakhs of rupees per candidate. Once around 120 matching questions were confirmed in a circulating PDF, the government cancelled the examination in its entirety, a markedly more decisive response than in 2024, and re-conducted it on 21 June 2026 for all registered candidates without additional fees. That this breach occurred after the 2024 Act, the Radhakrishnan Committee's report, and roughly two years of reform effort, and involved an individual formally engaged by the NTA itself, has renewed scrutiny of whether legal and technological safeguards alone can secure the human element of examination administration.

7. Parliamentary and Political Contestation

The controversy has been a recurring flashpoint in Parliament since mid-2024, with Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and other MPs repeatedly seeking a dedicated debate, demanding accountability and ministerial resignation. In July 2026 Gandhi alleged more than 150 paper leaks over the preceding decade and renewed calls for a Joint Parliamentary Committee inquiry. The ruling BJP-led NDA has maintained it is willing to debate the issue, while pointing to comparable leaks in opposition-governed states such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, Kerala and Karnataka to argue the criticism is selective. The pressure proved decisive for the education minister personally: following a youth-led protest movement organising as the Cockroach Janta Party, Dharmendra Pradhan resigned on 25 July 2026, and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi assumed additional charge of the portfolio. This episode illustrates a broader pattern for the committee to consider major reform.

8. The 2026 Amendment Bill and the Next Phase of Reform

As the Supreme Court heard further petitions in Vanshika Yadav v. Union of India, the government informed it that a new committee under Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani had been constituted to recommend the next phase of examination reform. The same week, Parliament passed the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, which sharply raises penalties, introduces Special Fast Track Courts and Public Prosecutors, and sets defined investigation and trial timelines, intended to address criticism that prosecutions under the 2024 Act had moved too slowly to deter offenders.

9. Economic, Social and Institutional Impact

Recurring leaks impose costs well beyond those directly implicated in malpractice: genuine aspirants who have spent years and significant family savings preparing face disrupted academic calendars and prolonged uncertainty, while the coaching industry that has grown around NEET-UG has itself, in cases such as Pune and Sikar, become entangled in leak networks. Repeated breaches have also eroded public confidence in the NTA and in centralised examinations more broadly, prompting calls across the political spectrum for decentralised administration, fully computer-based testing, or a more fundamental review of the single national entrance test model for medical admissions.



Timeline

Date	Event
2017	The National Testing Agency (NTA) is established as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Education to conduct standardised entrance examinations, including NEET-UG, on a nationwide scale.
5 Feb 2024	The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 is introduced in the Lok Sabha by Union Minister Jitendra Singh, aimed at curbing paper leaks and organised cheating in central government examinations.
9 Feb 2024	Parliament passes the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, in both Houses.
25 Feb 2024	President Droupadi Murmu gives assent to the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, although it is not yet brought into force.
5 May 2024	NEET-UG 2024 is conducted at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad, with over 24 lakh candidates appearing. Bihar Police later find that the question paper was stolen from a trunk at Oasis School, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand.
6 May 2024	Social media posts allege that the NEET-UG question paper has been leaked. The NTA denies large-scale wrongdoing and attributes reported issues to an isolated incident at one Rajasthan centre.
4 Jun 2024	NEET-UG results are declared. Anomalies, including 67 candidates sharing the top rank and unusually high marks awarded to some candidates at a Patna centre, prompt widespread public outrage.
14 Jun 2024	The Supreme Court issues notice on a plea seeking a CBI investigation into the alleged paper leak and other irregularities.
21 Jun 2024	The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 is brought into force, days after the UGC-NET examination is cancelled over a leak detected on the darknet.
22 Jun 2024	The Ministry of Education constitutes a seven-member High-Level Committee of Experts, chaired by former ISRO chairman Dr K. Radhakrishnan, to recommend reforms to the NTA's examination processes and data security.
23 Jun 2024	The Bihar Police's Economic Offences Unit (EOU), which had already arrested thirteen members of an inter-state "solver gang" and recovered partially burnt question papers, hands the investigation over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The NTA conducts a re-test for 813 of the 1,563 candidates who had earlier been awarded contested grace marks, after the Supreme Court directs that the grace marks be annulled.
8 Jul 2024	The Supreme Court observes that the sanctity of the examination has been compromised and that the paper leak is an admitted fact, while stating that cancellation of the entire exam would remain a measure of last resort.
20 Jul 2024	The NTA publishes centre-wise and city-wise results under anonymised identities, as directed by the Court, to help assess whether the leak was localised or systemic.
23 Jul 2024	The Supreme Court declines to order a full re-test, holding that the available evidence points to leakage confined to Hazaribagh and Patna, with around 155 identified beneficiaries, rather than a systemic breach affecting all 24 lakh candidates.
Oct 2024	The Radhakrishnan Committee submits its report to the Ministry of Education, containing 101 recommendations, including a proposed "DIGI-EXAM" identity-verification system, at least 1,000 secure government-run testing centres, and a restructured NTA headed by a Director General.
Apr 2025	The Bihar EOU arrests Sanjeev Kumar Singh, alias Sanjeev Mukhiya, the alleged mastermind of the



Date	Event
	NEET-UG 2024 paper leak network, who is also wanted in connection with the Bihar Public Service Commission Teacher Recruitment Exam leak of March 2024.
Jun 2025	The Enforcement Directorate conducts raids in Patna and Ranchi linked to the finances of the alleged NEET-UG 2024 paper leak network.
3 May 2026	NEET-UG 2026 is conducted nationwide. A handwritten version of the question paper, allegedly dictated during a coaching session in Pune by an NTA-linked chemistry lecturer, is later found to have circulated among coaching centres in Rajasthan's Sikar district.
12 May 2026	The CBI registers a case based on a complaint from the Department of Higher Education after roughly 120 questions in a circulating PDF are found to match the actual NEET-UG 2026 paper. The Union Government cancels the examination in its entirety.
14–15 May 2026	The CBI arrests the alleged kingpin of the leak network along with several accomplices from Jaipur, Gurugram, Nashik, Pune and Ahilyanagar, and conducts searches across Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.
21 Jun 2026	NEET-UG 2026 is re-conducted nationwide for all previously registered candidates, without fresh registration or additional fees, following the cancellation of the original examination.
Jul 2026	The Supreme Court hears petitions in Vanshika Yadav v. Union of India seeking further reform of examination conduct. The Centre informs the Court that it has constituted a new high-powered committee, headed by Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani, to recommend the next phase of examination reforms.
22 Jul 2026	Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi presents figures alleging more than 150 paper leaks over the preceding decade, renewing opposition demands for a Parliamentary debate and a Joint Parliamentary Committee; the government asserts it is willing to discuss the issue on the floor of the House.
25 Jul 2026	Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigns from the Union Council of Ministers amid sustained youth-led protests, organised under the banner of the Cockroach Janta Party, demanding accountability for the NEET-UG 2026 leak. President Droupadi Murmu accepts his resignation, and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi is given additional charge of the Ministry of Education.
27 Jul 2026	The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, is introduced in the Lok Sabha, proposing sharply enhanced penalties and fast-track prosecution mechanisms.
29 Jul 2026	The Lok Sabha passes the Amendment Bill by voice vote amid continuing opposition protests; the Rajya Sabha subsequently passes it in the same form.

Major Political Parties, Institutions and Stakeholders

- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) / National Democratic Alliance (NDA):** As the ruling party, has overseen the 2024 Act, the Radhakrishnan and Nilekani Committees, and the 2026 Amendment Bill, while defending the NTA's overall record and pointing to leaks in opposition-governed states.
- Indian National Congress (INC) and the INDIA bloc:** The principal opposition grouping, led in the Lok Sabha by Rahul Gandhi, has repeatedly demanded a parliamentary debate, ministerial accountability, and a Joint Parliamentary Committee inquiry.

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3. **Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and other Bihar-based parties:** Given that the 2024 leak network was based substantially in Bihar and Jharkhand, these parties have a direct stake in the investigation's outcome and in the debate over central versus state responsibility.
4. **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Trinamool Congress (TMC), Shiv Sena (UBT), and other regional opposition parties:** Have joined opposition coordination on the issue in Parliament, while governing states in which state-level leaks have separately occurred, a fact the ruling party has highlighted.
5. **National Testing Agency (NTA):** The examination-conducting body at the centre of the controversy, whose leadership changed after 2024 and whose custody and vendor-management procedures have been repeatedly scrutinised.
6. **Ministry of Education, Government of India:** Oversees the NTA and steered the Public Examinations Act and its amendment through Parliament. Dharmendra Pradhan led the Ministry through both controversies before resigning in July 2026, after which Pralhad Joshi assumed additional charge.
7. **Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) and student protest movements:** A youth protest movement that emerged around the 2026 controversy, demanding the Education Minister's resignation and broader reform; widely credited with precipitating Pradhan's resignation.
8. **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):** The lead federal investigating agency in both leak cases, responsible for arrests and for establishing the inter-state scope of the criminal networks involved.
9. **Bihar Economic Offences Unit (EOU) and Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG):** State police units whose initial investigative work in 2024 and 2026 respectively was decisive before each case was transferred to the CBI.
10. **Supreme Court of India:** Adjudicated the 2024 verdict declining a full re-test, and is hearing the ongoing 2026 proceedings in Vanshika Yadav v. Union of India, which produced the Nilekani Committee's mandate.
11. **K. Radhakrishnan Committee (2024) and Nandan Nilekani Committee (2026):** Successive expert bodies tasked with reforming the NTA and India's examination security architecture; their overlapping and partly unimplemented recommendations are central to assessing the government's response.
12. **Student associations and coaching industry bodies:** Have organised protests demanding transparency, though some coaching centres have themselves been implicated in leak networks.

Previous Attempts to Address the Crisis

1. **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024:** India's first dedicated anti-leak law, enforced from June 2024, but criticised for slow initial prosecutions, a gap the 2026 amendment sought to address.
2. **Supreme Court intervention in NEET-UG 2024:** Directed the annulment of contested grace marks and a partial re-test, while declining to order a full nationwide re-test on the evidence before it.
3. **K. Radhakrishnan Committee (2024–2025):** Produced 101 recommendations for NTA reform; by 2026, implementation remained partial, a gap the subsequent leak highlighted.

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4. **Replacement of NTA leadership (2024):** The government replaced the NTA's Director General, though opposition parties called this insufficient to address structural vulnerabilities.
5. **CBI-led centralisation of investigation:** In both 2024 and 2026, cases were transferred to the CBI once their inter-state character became evident, at the cost of time before the full network was mapped.
6. **NEET-UG 2026 full cancellation and re-conduct:** A markedly more decisive response than in 2024, protecting the integrity of the re-conducted test at significant cost to unaffected candidates.
7. **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026:** Enhanced penalties and fast-track prosecution, passed in 2026, though too recent for its deterrent effect to be assessed.
8. **Nandan Nilekani Committee (2026, ongoing):** Constituted on Supreme Court direction to recommend the next phase of reform; its findings had not been submitted at the time of writing.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- What institutional and technological changes to the NTA's examination process, including question paper custody, transport, and digital delivery, would most effectively close the vulnerabilities exposed by the 2024 and 2026 leaks?
- Should decisions on whether to order a full re-test versus a partial or centre-specific remedy be governed by clearer statutory or regulatory criteria, rather than case-by-case judicial determination, and if so, what should those criteria be?
- What mechanisms can ensure that expert committee recommendations, such as those of the Radhakrishnan Committee, are implemented within a defined timeframe rather than remaining partially executed years after submission?
- Is a Joint Parliamentary Committee inquiry, as demanded by the opposition, an appropriate and useful mechanism for this issue, and how should its findings relate to ongoing CBI investigations and expert committee work?
- How should accountability be distributed between the central government, the NTA as an operational body, state governments hosting examination centres, and private actors such as schools and coaching centres implicated in leaks?
- What redress should be available to genuine candidates whose results, admissions, or academic calendars are disrupted by a leak or its investigation, and who should bear the cost of that redress?
- Should India move toward a decentralised or regionally staggered examination model, a fully computer-based testing format, or continue with a single centralised paper-based national examination, and what trade-offs does each option carry for equity, cost, and security?
- How can the regulation of private coaching centres be strengthened to prevent their becoming distribution points for leaked material, without unduly restricting a sector that many low-income aspirants rely on for exam preparation?



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