

CURRENT AFFAIRS: 15.05.2026

NEET-UG scrapped over paper leak, Govt orders fresh exam, CBI probe

A senior official in the NTA said on Monday that they had received inputs about a PDF file circulating on May 7 and had informed investigating agencies about the matter. The key question was whether the document was circulating before the exam, the official said.

NEET-UG 2026 Paper Leak: Crisis in India's Examination System

The **National Testing Agency (NTA)** cancelled the **National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET-UG)** 2026 examination following allegations of a major paper leak and the circulation of a highly accurate "guess paper," with the probe now handed over to the **Central Bureau of Investigation**.

- The controversy has reignited concerns over transparency and systemic failures in India's exam ecosystem, alongside delays in the full-scale implementation of the **Dr. K. Radhakrishnan Committee (2024) (High-Level Committee of Experts)** recommendations.

What are the Systemic Challenges in India's Exam Ecosystem?

- **Structural and Statutory Limitations:**
 - **The "Society" vs. "Statutory Body" Debate:** Unlike the UPSC (a Constitutional body), the NTA is registered as a **Society** under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
 - This creates a "legal lightweight" status, often leading to limited administrative teeth and a **perceived lack of sovereign accountability** during crises.
 - **Lack of a Permanent Cadre:** The NTA relies heavily on staff on deputation and contractual employees.
 - Without a dedicated, permanent institutional cadre, building a long-term **"culture of secrecy"** and specialized expertise in psychometrics and security becomes difficult.
 - **Single-Point Failure Design:** The **"Mega-Exam" model** (conducting a high-stakes test for 20+ lakh students on a single day) creates a catastrophic risk profile.
 - If one link in the chain breaks, the entire national system collapses. The National Testing Agency adopted a **"Zero Error, Zero Tolerance" policy**, introducing measures such as sealed handling of confidential materials, GPS-tracked transport, police escorts, and CCTV surveillance.
 - However, the recurrence of paper leaks like the NEET-UG 2024 paper leak exposed major gaps between policy claims and on-ground implementation.
- **"Paper Trail" and Logistical Vulnerabilities:**
 - **Outsourcing the Un-outsourcing-able:** Critical tasks like printing, warehousing, and transportation are often outsourced to **private third-party vendors**. Each "human touchpoint" in this chain is a potential leak point.
 - **"Center-Level" Weakness:** Many national exams are held in private schools or **"unverified" colleges** that lack standardized security infrastructure (e.g., faulty CCTVs, lack of signal jammers, or compromised invigilators).
 - **OMR Paradox:** While OMR-based tests are cost-effective for millions, the physical handling of answer sheets after the exam (transportation to scanning centers) provides a second window for tampering.

▪ Technological and Digital Divide:

- **Hacking vs. Leaking Trade-off:** Transitioning to **Computer-Based Testing (CBT)** solves the physical paper-leak problem but **introduces "remote-access" risks and hacking vulnerabilities**.
- **Digital Infrastructure Gap:** India lacks enough government-owned, high-capacity digital testing centers.
 - Relying on private **"iON" centers or cyber-café-style setups often leads to technical glitches** and "lab-based" cheating syndicates.
 - The National Testing Agency can conduct computer-based tests for only around 1.5 lakh candidates in a single shift. Conducting exams across multiple shifts also creates challenges in score normalization and ensuring fairness across different sessions.
- **Sophisticated Malpractice:** As enforcement gets stricter, cheating syndicates have evolved to use **deep-web communication** (Telegram, Darknet) and **high-tech wearables** (Bluetooth-enabled buttons or spectacles) that are difficult to detect via traditional frisking.

▪ The Socio-Economic "Pressure Cooker":

- **The Coaching-Nexus:** The billion-dollar coaching industry in hubs like Kota creates a **"win-at-all-costs" mentality**.
 - When the "reward" for a seat is so high, the "incentive" to cheat or buy a paper *becomes exponentially greater.
- **Extreme Competition vs. Limited Seats:** With a massive demand-supply gap (e.g., nearly 23 lakh students for roughly 1 lakh MBBS seats), exams have become **"elimination tests"** rather than **"selection tests."** This desperation fuels the demand for paper-leak mafias.
 - The **sharp fee disparity between affordable government colleges** and expensive private institutions makes NEET-UG a high-stakes, "do-or-die" examination for many aspirants.
- **Ethical Erosion:** There is a growing **"normalization of corruption"** where parents are often willing to **pay exorbitant sums** to secure their child's future through illicit means, undermining the very concept of meritocracy.

▪ Legal and Federal Hurdles:

- **Concurrent List Friction:** Education is in the **Concurrent List**. While the **Public Examinations Act, 2024, is a Central law**, many paper-leak syndicates operate across state borders (e.g., the Bihar-Jharkhand-Rajasthan axis).
 - Lack of real-time data sharing between State Police and Central agencies (like the CBI/NTA) often delays the containment of a leak.

National Testing Agency (NTA)

- **About:** The National Testing Agency (NTA) is a specialized, autonomous, and self-sustained organization established by the **Ministry of Education** to conduct transparent, efficient, and internationally standardized entrance examinations for higher education in India.
 - Established in 2017, the NTA is a **Society registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860**. It is **not a statutory body** created by an Act of Parliament, but instead relies on the executive powers of the Union Government.
- **Key Examinations Conducted:** The agency is responsible for administering massive high-stakes undergraduate admissions, including **JEE-Main (Engineering), NEET-UG (Medicine), and CUET-UG**.
 - It also conducts crucial postgraduate and eligibility assessments such as **CUET-PG, UGC-NET (for Assistant Professor and JRF), and CSIR UGC-NET**.

- **Governance & Leadership:** The NTA is overseen by a **Governing Body** comprising eminent educationists and members from user institutions.
 - Its operations are led by the **Director General (DG)** as its Chief Executive Officer, a post generally at the rank of **Joint Secretary to the Government of India**.
- **Core Strategic Functions:** The agency's operational goals include identifying secure partner institutions for **online testing**, creating scientifically vetted **question banks**, and building a robust **Research & Development (R&D)** culture in educational testing.



SC Collegium Recommends 9 Judges to Calcutta HC

Why in News?

The **Supreme Court collegium** has recommended 9 advocates to the Central Government for elevation as judges of the **Calcutta High Court**.

What is the Process of Appointment of HC Judges?

- **Appointment of High Court Judges:** A High Court (HC) judge is appointed by the **President** under **Article 217** of the Constitution. The **chief justice** is appointed by the President after consultation with the **chief justice of India** and the **governor** of the state concerned.
 - For the appointment of other judges, the chief justice of the concerned **high court is also consulted**. In case of a **common high court** for two or more states, the governors of all the states concerned are consulted by the president.
- **Difference from Appointment of SC judges:** A Supreme Court (SC) judge is appointed by the **President** under **Article 124 (2)** of the Constitution.
 - The President appoints the **Chief Justice of India** after consulting the necessary Supreme Court and High Court judges, while other judges are appointed in **consultation** with the Chief Justice and relevant judges.
- **Constitutional Basis for Appointment of Judges:**

Supreme Court Judges

Provision	Article	Purpose and Key Features
SC judge	Article 124	The President appoints SC judges in consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and other judges. The President appoints the seniormost Judge of the Supreme Court as CJI (by convention).
Acting Chief Justice of India	Article 126	When the office of CJI is vacant or the CJI is unable to perform duties (due to absence or otherwise), the President appoints another Supreme Court Judge to act as CJI.
Ad hoc Judges	Article 127	If there is no quorum of permanent judges to hold or continue a session, the CJI (with prior consent of the President and after consulting the concerned High Court CJ) may request a qualified High Court Judge to sit as an ad hoc Judge for the required period.
Retired Judges	Article 128	The CJI (with prior consent of the President) may request any retired Supreme Court Judge or a qualified retired High Court Judge to sit and act as a Judge of the Supreme Court. The retired judge has full powers and privileges while sitting.

High Court Judges

Provision	Article	Purpose and Key Features
High Court Judges	Article 217	Every Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with the Chief Justice of India , the Governor of the State and, in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court .
Acting Chief Justice of High Court	Article 223	When the office of Chief Justice is vacant or the CJ is unable to perform duties , the President appoints another Judge of that High Court to act as Chief Justice.
Additional Judges	Article 224(1)	For a temporary increase in business or to clear arrears, the President may appoint Additional Judges for a period not exceeding 2 years.
Acting Judges	Article 224(2)	The President may appoint a person to act as a Judge when a sitting Judge is absent or is acting as Chief Justice.
Ad hoc Judges	Article 224A	The Chief Justice of the High Court (with prior consent of the President) may request any retired High Court Judge (of that or any other High Court) to sit and act as a Judge . The retired judge must consent and receives allowances determined by the President. This provision is used to clear backlog.

Appointment of Supreme Court Judges

he Constitution of India – **Article 124**: *Establishment and constitution of Supreme Court* say that:

- There shall be a Supreme Court of India consisting of a Chief Justice of India and, until Parliament by law prescribes a larger number, of not more than seven other Judges.
- Every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be **appointed by the President** by warrant under his/her hand and seal after consultation with such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Court in the States as President may deem necessary for the purpose and shall hold office until he attains the age of 65 years.
- In judicial appointments, it is obligatory for the President to take into account the opinion of the Chief Justice of India.
- The opinion of the Chief Justice of India is binding on the Government. The opinion of the CJI must be formed after due consultation with a collegium of at least four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court.
- Even if two judges give an adverse opinion, then he should not send the recommendation to the Government.

After independence, India adopted the Constitution in 1950. According to the Constitution, up to 1973, the President appointed the Chief Justice of India and remaining judges of the Supreme Court in consultation with the CJI and other judges as he deemed necessary.

1. Appointment of CJI 1950-1973

- Until 1973, there existed a consensus between the Government of the day and the Chief Justice of India.
- A convention was formed where the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court was to be appointed as the Chief Justice of India.
- In 1973, A.N.Ray was appointed as the Chief Justice of India. This violated the convention formed earlier since Justice A.N.Ray superseded three other Supreme Court judges senior to him.
- Again in 1977, another chief justice was appointed who superseded his seniors.
- This resulted in a clash between the Executive and the Judiciary.

2. First judges case, 1982

- A petition was filed in 1982 in the Supreme Court of India.
- This case is known as the **S.P.Gupta Case or First Judges case**.
- The Supreme Court discussed 2 major points during the proceedings of this case
- When asked the Supreme Court of India whether the word “consultation” in the constitutional article 124 mean “concurrence”; **the Supreme court overruled this and denied saying that Consultation does not mean concurrence**. The President was not bound to make a decision based on the consultation of the Supreme Court.
- Another important point in the discussion, in this case, was the part where the Supreme Court decided that a High Court Judge can be transferred to any other high court of a state even against his will.

3. Second judges case,1993

- Another petition was filed in 1993 by the **Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association (SCARA)**.
- In this case, the Supreme court overruled its earlier verdict and changed the meaning of consultation to concurrence. Thus binding the President of India with the consultations of the Chief justice of India.
- This resulted in the birth of the Collegium System.

4. Third Judges Case, 1998

- In the year 1998, the presidential reference to the Supreme court was issued questioning the meaning of the word consultation in articles 124, 217, and 222 of the Constitution.
- The chief justice won't be the only one as a part of the consultation process. Consultation would include a collegium of **4 senior-most judges of the Supreme court**. Even if 2 of the judges are against the opinion, the CJI will not recommend it to the government.

The gist of the Third Judges case:

Appointment of Supreme Court Judge	Appointment of High Court Judge	Transfer of High Court Judge
4 senior-most judges of the Supreme court	2 senior-most judges of the Supreme court	4 senior-most judges of the Supreme court along with the judges of the two High Courts in concern.

- In the verdict, the Supreme Court laid down strict guidelines for the appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court and high courts which is currently known as the Collegium System.

5. Collegium System

- In this system of appointment of Judges, the collegium will recommend the names of the candidates to the Central Government.
- Also, the central government will send the names of the proposed candidates for consultation.
- The appointment process takes a long time since there isn't a fixed time limit for it. If the Collegium resends the same name again then the government has to give its assent to the names.

*The Collegium System faced a lot of criticism not only from the government but also from civil society due to its **Lack of Transparency and Accountability**.*

This led to the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2014 the National Judicial Commission Act (NJAC) to replace the collegium system for the appointment of judges.

6. National Judicial Appointment Commission Act, 2014

- The 1993 judgment was the basis on which a five-judge Constitution Bench declared the **National Judicial Appointments Commission Act (NJAC)** and the **Constitutional** (Ninety-Nine Amendment) Act, 2014 **unconstitutional** in October 2015.
- NJAC too would recommend names for the Appointment of Supreme Court Judge and Appointment and Transfer of High Court Judge
- Composition of NJAC
 1. The Chief Justice of India
 2. 2 senior-most judges of the Supreme Court
 3. The Law Minister of India
 4. 2 eminent members that are chosen by the Selection Committee

PCOS has a new name: Here's why experts say it matters for millions of women

A global medical consensus has renamed the condition PMOS, saying the old term misunderstood a complex hormonal disorder affecting one in eight women

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) has officially been renamed **Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)**, effective May 2026.

- This change follows a 14-year global effort to accurately reflect that the condition is a complex metabolic and hormonal disorder, not merely an ovarian disease, aiming to reduce stigma and speed diagnosis.
- **Key Reasons for the Change to PMOS:**
 - **Scientific Accuracy:** The term “cysts” was considered **misleading** because the condition **does not involve abnormal ovarian cysts**. Instead, many affected individuals have **arrested follicular development** that **appears cyst-like on ultrasound**.
 - **Multi-systemic Nature:** The new name reflects the disorder's broader **endocrine, metabolic and ovarian dysfunction**, including insulin resistance, hormonal imbalance and reproductive abnormalities, rather than portraying it solely as a **gynaecological disorder**.
 - **Prevalence and Diagnosis:** Affecting **one in eight women globally**, and 70% of affected individuals remaining undiagnosed, the reclassification aims to reduce **delayed diagnosis** and ensure patients receive holistic treatment for hormonal and metabolic abnormalities.
- **Metabolic Significance in India:** In India, the condition affects an estimated 16-18% of women. The inclusion of "metabolic" in the name is critical for the Indian population, which is linked to the **"thrifty genotype" hypothesis** - a genetic predisposition to store energy efficiently that increases the risk of **obesity and Type 2 diabetes**.

Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome

- **About:** It is a **common, chronic, and complex disorder** affecting women of reproductive age.
 - It is defined as a **multifaceted endocrine and metabolic condition characterized** by high androgen levels, **irregular ovulation/periods, and systemic metabolic issues, rather than just ovarian cysts**.
- **Risk Factors and Lifestyle:** Development of the disorder is linked to genetics, neuroendocrine disruptions, and modifiable factors such as sedentary lifestyles, poor diet, and obesity.
- **Clinical Characterization:** The condition is primarily identified by **chronic anovulation**, with symptoms including **irregular periods, hirsutism (excessive hair growth), and weight gain**.
- **Hormonal Medications:** While synthetic drugs like Metformin and Oral Contraceptive Pills (OCPs) are standard, their side effects have prompted a significant research shift toward traditional and herbal medicines.