



UPSC &amp; STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

# NEET-UG 2026 Paper Leak — SC Petitions Mount, NTA Announces CBT from 2027

18 May 2026

**SOCIAL ISSUES****POLITY****GS2**

CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**[bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com) →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

[epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

# NEET-UG 2026 Paper Leak — SC Petitions Mount, NTA Announces CBT from 2027

18 May 2026 · 9 min read · 2 tags

## WHY IN NEWS

Fresh petitions were filed in the **Supreme Court of India on May 18, 2026** — by the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), the United Doctors Front, and individual petitioners — demanding **dissolution of the National Testing Agency (NTA)** and a mandatory shift to **Computer-Based Testing (CBT)** for NEET-UG, after the **NTA confirmed a paper leak** and cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination held on May 3. Separately, the NTA announced that from **2027 onwards, NEET-UG will be conducted in CBT mode.**

## TIMELINE OF THE NEET-UG 2026 CRISIS

DATE	EVENT
<b>May 3, 2026</b>	NEET-UG 2026 conducted nationwide; pen-and-paper mode; 2.2 million+ candidates appeared
<b>May 12, 2026</b>	NTA officially cancels NEET-UG 2026 after confirming paper leak; CBI begins investigation
<b>May 12–14, 2026</b>	CBI arrests P V Kulkarni (retired Chemistry professor, Latur; operating from Pune) as alleged kingpin of the leak syndicate; 15+ total arrests by CBI and Rajasthan SOG combined
<b>May 12–17, 2026</b>	Rajasthan SOG investigation reveals handwritten question set with ~120 questions matching the actual exam paper; <b>Sikar, Rajasthan</b> identified as primary distribution hub
<b>May 17, 2026</b>	NTA announces re-examination date: <b>June 21, 2026</b> ; pen-and-paper mode; 2:00 PM – 5:15 PM; no fresh registration required; original centres and candidature carried forward; application fee refunded
<b>May 18, 2026</b>	Fresh SC petitions filed by FAIMA (NTA dissolution), United Doctors Front (NTA replacement), and a separate plea seeking mandatory CBT for NEET-UG; NTA announces CBT shift from 2027

## THE SUPREME COURT PETITIONS (MAY 18, 2026)

Three distinct categories of petitions reached the Supreme Court on May 18:

## 1. FAIMA Petition — NTA Dissolution

The **Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA)** filed a petition seeking:

- Complete **dissolution of the National Testing Agency**
- Transfer of NEET-UG conduct to a new, independent statutory authority
- Independent judicial inquiry into the 2025 and 2026 paper leak episodes
- Compensation mechanism for affected candidates

## 2. United Doctors Front Petition — NTA Replacement

The **United Doctors Front** filed separately, seeking:

- **Replacement of NTA** with a more accountable body under direct parliamentary oversight
- Mandatory audit of all NTA question-bank security protocols
- An interim High-Power Committee to oversee the June 21 re-examination

## 3. CBT Mandate Petition

A separate petition sought a court direction making **Computer-Based Testing mandatory** for NEET-UG from 2027, arguing:

- Pen-and-paper mode is structurally susceptible to physical paper leaks
- CBT, as used by JEE-Advanced and GATE, is inherently more secure
- The constitutional right to a **fair examination** (derived from Article 21 — right to livelihood and dignity) demands a leak-proof system

*The Supreme Court's role in NEET-related petitions is not new. In 2024, the SC had examined allegations of NEET paper leaks and grace marks; the 2025 controversy also resulted in petitions. The 2026 petitions represent the the Supreme Court has been called upon to intervene in NTA's examination conduct.*

## THE NTA'S RESPONSE — CBT FROM 2027

Simultaneously with the mounting legal pressure, the **NTA announced on May 18, 2026** that:

ANNOUNCEMENT	DETAIL
<b>Mode change</b>	NEET-UG to shift from <b>Pen-and-Paper (PBT)</b> to <b>Computer-Based Test (CBT)</b>
<b>Effective from</b>	<b>2027 onwards</b> (NEET-UG 2026 re-exam on June 21 remains pen-and-paper)
<b>Justification</b>	Enhanced security, randomised question sets per candidate, digital audit trail
<b>Infrastructure requirement</b>	NTA must empanel sufficient CBT centres with secure server infrastructure across all districts

This announcement pre-empts legislative or judicial compulsion, but the petitions before the SC may still result in court-monitored implementation timelines or structural reforms beyond mere mode change.

## CBT VS PBT — THE POLICY DEBATE

### What is Computer-Based Testing (CBT)?

In CBT, each candidate receives questions on a computer terminal from a **randomised pool**. Answers are recorded digitally; no physical paper is involved. In contrast, **Pen-and-Paper Based Testing (PBT)** uses printed question booklets and OMR answer sheets.

## Comparative Analysis

PARAMETER	COMPUTER-BASED TEST (CBT)	PEN-AND-PAPER TEST (PBT)
<b>Physical paper leak risk</b>	Very low — no printed booklets in advance	High — question papers must be printed, transported, stored weeks in advance
<b>Randomisation</b>	Each candidate can receive a unique question set from a pool	Same booklet across a centre/city; parallel sets at most
<b>Audit trail</b>	Complete digital log — timestamp, session data, responses	Limited to OMR sheets; physical chain of custody
<b>Scalability</b>	Requires sufficient CBT centres with stable power and internet	Easier to scale to remote centres with no digital infrastructure
<b>Rural access</b>	Digital divide is a genuine barrier — not all candidates have prior computer familiarity	Level playing field on format; though socioeconomic disparities persist
<b>Re-testing</b>	Can conduct multiple sessions/slots; normalisation required	Single-day, single-time advantage
<b>Normalisation controversy</b>	Multi-slot CBT requires percentile normalisation — itself a source of controversy (as seen in JEE-Main)	No normalisation needed if single session
<b>Infrastructure cost</b>	High upfront — NTA must certify thousands of CBT centres	Lower recurring cost; existing exam hall network usable

## Indian Precedents for CBT in High-Stakes Exams

EXAMINATION	MODE	NOTES
<b>JEE-Main</b>	CBT (since 2018)	1 million+ candidates; 2 sessions per year; NTA-conducted
<b>JEE-Advanced</b>	CBT (since 2018)	~1.5 lakh candidates; IIT-conducted
<b>GATE</b>	CBT	IIT-conducted; considered most secure
<b>CUET-UG</b>	CBT	NTA-conducted; 2022 onwards
<b>UGC-NET</b>	CBT	Shifted to CBT after 2018 leak controversy in PBT mode
<b>CAT</b>	CBT	IIM-conducted; long-standing CBT history
<b>NEET-UG</b>	PBT (till 2026)	2 million+ candidates; being shifted to CBT from 2027

After the **UGC-NET 2018 paper leak**, the examination shifted permanently to CBT mode. NEET-UG's proposed 2027 transition mirrors this playbook.

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY (NTA)

PARAMETER	DETAIL
<b>Established</b>	November 2017 (under the Ministry of Education)
<b>Legal status</b>	<b>Society registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860</b> — not a statutory body
<b>Headquarters</b>	New Delhi
<b>Mandate</b>	Conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions; relieve universities of examination burden
<b>Key examinations</b>	NEET-UG, JEE-Main, CUET-UG, CUET-PG, UGC-NET, CMAT, GPAT, CSIR-UGC-NET
<b>Annual candidates</b>	~5 crore+ across all examinations
<b>Governance</b>	Governed by a Board of Directors; Director General is head of executive
<b>Funding</b>	Fees from candidates; Ministry of Education grants

### Why NTA's Legal Status Matters

Because NTA is a **registered society and not a statutory authority**, it is not directly accountable to Parliament in the manner a statutory body would be. Critics — including FAIMA — argue this gap in accountability enables opacity. The petitions seek either:

- ❶ **Statutory backing** for NTA via an Act of Parliament, or
- ❷ **Dissolution and replacement** by a new statutory examination commission.

## NTA REFORM OPTIONS — POLICY SPECTRUM

The debate around NTA reform spans a spectrum from incremental improvement to structural overhaul:

REFORM OPTION	DESCRIPTION	PRECEDENT
<b>Mode shift to CBT</b>	Change examination format; retain NTA structure	UGC-NET (2018), JEE-Main (2018)
<b>Third-party security audit</b>	Independent agency audits question-paper security chain annually	ISO-certified banking examination protocols
<b>Question bank decentralisation</b>	Questions contributed by multiple certified institutions; no single point of failure	UPSC model — paper set by external experts with strict protocols
<b>Statutory NTA</b>	Convert NTA into a statutory body via an Act of Parliament; ensure parliamentary accountability	UPSC (Article 315), SSC (statutory body)
<b>Dissolution and new commission</b>	Abolish NTA; create a <b>National Examination Commission</b> with judicial representation on board	FAIMA demand; parallel: Banking Service Recruitment Board model
<b>Decentralisation to states for PG</b>	Allow states to conduct their own examinations; restrict NTA to central-level tests	Pre-NEET arrangement (2013–2016 state exams)

## BACKGROUND — THE CONSECUTIVE CONTROVERSY PATTERN

This is the **second consecutive year** that NEET-UG has faced a major paper-leak controversy:

- **NEET-UG 2025:** Allegations of paper leak; grace marks controversy; Supreme Court intervention; multiple High Court petitions. NTA denied systematic leak but CBI investigated.
- **NEET-UG 2026:** Confirmed paper leak (Rajasthan SOG physical evidence — handwritten questions matching exam paper); CBI arrests; examination cancelled; re-examination announced.

The back-to-back crises have significantly eroded public confidence in NTA and in the centralised examination architecture for medical admissions.

## THE NEET EXAMINATION — KEY FACTS

PARAMETER	DETAIL
<b>Full name</b>	National Eligibility cum Entrance Test — Undergraduate
<b>Conducted by</b>	National Testing Agency (NTA) since 2019
<b>Purpose</b>	Admission to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH, and veterinary courses in India
<b>Introduced</b>	2013 (by MCI); initially implemented 2016; made sole gateway from 2017
<b>Constitutional basis</b>	Entry 66, Union List — Coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education
<b>Candidates 2026</b>	22 lakh+ (2.2 million) registered
<b>Duration</b>	3 hours 15 minutes (2:00 PM – 5:15 PM)
<b>Subjects</b>	Physics (50 Q), Chemistry (50 Q), Biology (100 Q) — total 200 questions; 720 marks
<b>Negative marking</b>	-1 per wrong answer; +4 per correct answer

## UPSC RELEVANCE

### GS Paper 2 — Education Governance and Polity

#### Themes this article addresses:

- Role and accountability of regulatory bodies (NTA — a registered society, not a statutory authority)
- Supreme Court’s role as constitutional guardian — petitions, suo motu powers, monitoring of executive conduct
- Right to fair examination as a fundamental right (Article 21 dimension)
- Governance reform — CBT transition, examination security, institutional design
- Parliamentary accountability gaps when executive bodies lack statutory grounding

#### Mains Angles

- 1 **Examine the governance failures that led to back-to-back NEET-UG paper leaks in 2025 and 2026. What structural reforms should the NTA undergo to ensure examination integrity?** (GS2, 250 words)

- ② **Critically evaluate the Computer-Based Testing (CBT) model as a solution to paper leaks in mass entrance examinations in India. Are there equity concerns that must be addressed before implementation?** (GS2/GS3, 250 words)
- ③ **The Supreme Court has repeatedly intervened in NEET-UG controversies. Does this indicate a failure of executive accountability, or is judicial intervention an appropriate constitutional response?** (GS2, 150 words)

## Prelims Linkages

---

- NEET-UG: Entry 66, Union List; NTA conduct since 2019
- NTA: Registered society (not statutory body); established November 2017 under MoE
- CBT: JEE-Main shifted in 2018; UGC-NET shifted post-2018 leak
- FAIMA: Federation of All India Medical Association
- Article 21: Right to life and personal liberty — judicial expansion to include right to livelihood, dignity, fair procedure

---

Sources: *The Hindu*, *Indian Express*, *PIB*

---

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

### NEET-UG 2026 — KEY DATES:

Examination held: May 3, 2026

Cancellation confirmed: May 12, 2026 (paper leak confirmed)

Re-examination: June 21, 2026; 2:00 PM – 5:15 PM; pen-and-paper mode

CBT mode announced from: 2027 onwards

SC petitions (May 18): FAIMA (NTA dissolution), United Doctors Front (NTA replacement), separate CBT mandate plea

Candidates affected: 22 lakh+ (2.2 million)

No fresh registration required; centres and candidature carried forward; fee refunded

### INVESTIGATION (AS OF MAY 18, 2026):

Primary investigating agency: CBI

Kingpin arrested: P V Kulkarni (retired Chemistry professor, Latur; operating from Pune)

Total arrests: 15+ (CBI + Rajasthan SOG combined)

Physical evidence: Handwritten question set (~120 questions matching exam paper) found by Rajasthan SOG

Distribution epicentre: Sikar, Rajasthan

### NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY (NTA):

Established: November 2017

Legal status: Registered Society (Societies Registration Act, 1860) — not a statutory body

Under: Ministry of Education

Key exams: NEET-UG, JEE-Main, CUET-UG/PG, UGC-NET, CMAT, GPAT, CSIR-UGC-NET

Total annual candidates: ~5 crore+

### NEET-UG — EXAMINATION BASICS:

Full form: National Eligibility cum Entrance Test — Undergraduate

Purpose: Admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH, veterinary courses

Constitutional basis: Entry 66, Union List

NTA conduct: Since 2019

Pattern: 200 questions (Physics 50, Chemistry 50, Biology 100); 720 marks; +4/-1 marking

Duration: 3 hours 15 minutes

#### **FAIMA:**

Full form: Federation of All India Medical Association

Role: National federation representing medical associations; filed NTA dissolution petition on May 18, 2026

#### **CBT TRANSITION PRECEDENTS:**

JEE-Main: Shifted to CBT in 2018; NTA-conducted

JEE-Advanced: CBT since 2018; IIT-conducted

UGC-NET: Shifted to CBT after 2018 paper leak in PBT mode

CUET-UG: CBT from 2022 (NTA-conducted)

NEET-UG: Remaining PBT until 2026; CBT announced from 2027

#### **NEET HISTORY:**

Introduced: 2013 by Medical Council of India (MCI)

First implementation: 2016

Made sole gateway for medical admissions: 2017

Transferred to NTA: 2019

Consecutive controversy: 2025 (allegations) and 2026 (confirmed leak + cancellation)

[← NEWER ARTICLE](#)

**WHO Declares Ebola PHEIC — Bundibugyo Strain in DRC and...**

[OLDER ARTICLE →](#)

**India-Pakistan Ceasefire Has No Expiry Date — Army...**

## RELATED EDITORIALS

---

### INDIAN EXPRESS

#### [Attracting Global Researchers to India — A Window That Won't Stay Open](#)

17 May

---

### BUSINESS STANDARD

#### [Census 2027 and the Delimitation Reckoning -- What the Numbers Will Trigger](#)

16 May

---

### THE HINDU

#### [The Bhojshala Verdict and the Unfinished Business of the Places of Worship Act](#)

16 May

---

### INDIAN EXPRESS

#### [Hate Speech and the Limits of Judicial Restraint -- Why Existing Laws Are Not Enough](#)

16 May

---

## RELATED KEY TERMS

---

### KEY TERM

#### [42nd Amendment Freeze on Delimitation](#)

The constitutional freeze that locked Lok Sabha seat allocation to the...

---

### KEY TERM

#### [Active Case Finding \(TB\)](#)

A proactive public health strategy where health workers systematically...

---

### KEY TERM

#### [Advance Directive \(Living Will\)](#)

A legal document in which a competent adult specifies their medical...

---

### KEY TERM

#### [AFSPA \(Armed Forces Special Powers Act\)](#)

A central legislation granting special powers to armed forces...

---



CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

## Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/05/18/neet-ug-2026-sc-petitions-nta-cbt-reform/>

### ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

## BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com)

### 📌 OPPORTUNITY

## Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

**Ideal for:** Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · [ujiyari.com](http://ujiyari.com) · [bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com)