

UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · [UJIYARI.COM](https://ujiyari.com)**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

NTA Overhaul and a Minister's Exit: The Nilekani Task Force and Ministerial Responsibility

27 July 2026 ·

POLITY**SOCIAL ISSUES****GS2****GS4**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in 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 →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

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

NTA Overhaul and a Minister's Exit: The Nilekani Task Force and Ministerial Responsibility

27 July 2026 · 11 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

*The Prime Minister constituted a **six-member high-powered task force** chaired by Infosys co-founder **Nandan Nilekani** on **26 July 2026** to *overhaul* the **National Testing Agency (NTA)** and the entire public examination lifecycle. The announcement came a day after Union Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** resigned over the **NEET-UG 2026** paper leak.*

THE TASK FORCE AND ITS MANDATE

The panel is deliberately built around three competencies that a leak-proof examination system requires: identity and digital architecture, security and intelligence, and physical logistics.

MEMBER	BACKGROUND
Nandan Nilekani (Chair)	Co-founder, Infosys; former Chairman, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), 2009 to 2014
S. Somanath	Former Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
Tapan Deka	Former Director, Intelligence Bureau (IB)
Prof. V. Kamakoti	Director, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras
Anita Karwal	Former Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy
Amrit Lal Meena	1989-batch IAS officer; former Chief Secretary, Bihar; former Secretary, Ministry of Coal

The **mandate** covers **structural, administrative and technology-driven reform** across the whole examination lifecycle: question paper setting, printing, storage, transport, centre custody, candidate authentication, evaluation and result declaration. The brief explicitly names **artificial intelligence (AI)** and **blockchain-based verification** as instruments for tamper-evident question-paper custody and candidate identity. The new Education Minister has been tasked with rolling out **Computer-Based Testing (CBT)** for **NEET** and other major examinations **from 2027**.

WHAT THE NTA IS, AND WHY ITS LEGAL FORM MATTERS

ATTRIBUTE	DETAIL
Established	Approved by the Union Cabinet in 2017 , registered as a society in 2018
Legal form	Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860
Parent ministry	Ministry of Education
Status	Autonomous, self-sustaining testing organisation
Major examinations	NEET-UG, JEE (Main), UGC-NET, CUET
Annual candidate volume	Well over one crore across all its examinations

This table holds the central analytical point of the episode. The NTA is a **society, not a statutory body**. It was not created by an Act of Parliament, its governing council is not constituted under law, its officers hold no statutory tenure, and it answers to no independent appellate authority. A society can be reconstituted and its rules rewritten by executive decision, which sounds like flexibility but produces two opposite problems at once.

It lacks **independence**, because its autonomy rests on administrative goodwill rather than statutory protection. It also lacks **enforceable accountability**, because a candidate wronged by a leak has no statutory grievance mechanism, no defined liability of the agency, and no parliamentary committee with a standing remit over it. Compare this with the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**, a constitutional body under **Article 315** whose members enjoy security of tenure under **Article 317** and which reports annually to the President under **Article 323**. The contrast explains why the reform debate keeps returning to statutory status.

THE 2026 TIMELINE

DATE	EVENT
3 May 2026	NEET-UG 2026 conducted
June 2026	Irregularities surface; the examination is cancelled and the case referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)
20 June 2026	Indefinite sit-in begins at Jantar Mantar , Delhi
21 June 2026	NEET-UG re-test held; more than 20 lakh candidates appear
20 July 2026	“Sansad Chalo” march, on the opening day of the Monsoon Session
25 July 2026	Dharmendra Pradhan resigns as Union Education Minister
26 July 2026	Nilekani task force constituted; Pralhad Joshi takes charge of the Education Ministry
27 July 2026	Public Examinations Amendment Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha

The protest movement was led by the **Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)**, a youth-led movement, alongside student organisations, and ran as a **36-day agitation** that its organisers called off after the resignation. In the Lok Sabha on 27 July 2026, Opposition members pressed for a discussion on the handling of the protests before legislative business, a demand the House took up alongside the Bill.

THE MINISTERIAL CHANGE

Mr Pradhan announced his resignation on **25 July 2026** on the social media platform X, stating that his decision was driven by concern for students rather than personal considerations. President **Droupadi Murmu** accepted his resignation from the Union Council of Ministers. **Pralhad Joshi**, already Union Minister for **Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution** and for **New and Renewable Energy**, was given charge of the **Ministry of Education** and took over on **26 July 2026**, retaining his existing portfolios. He said he would discharge the duty “with complete humility”.

Constitutional position

PROVISION	CONTENT
Article 74(1)	Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister to aid and advise the President
Article 75(1)	The Prime Minister is appointed by the President; other Ministers are appointed on the Prime Minister's advice
Article 75(2)	Ministers hold office during the pleasure of the President
Article 75(3)	The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the House of the People
Article 78	The Prime Minister communicates the decisions of the Council to the President

A resignation is tendered **to the President through the Prime Minister**, and the reallocation of a portfolio is effected by the President on the Prime Minister's advice under the **Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961**.

Note the constitutional silence that matters. The Constitution codifies **collective** responsibility in Article 75(3). It does **not codify individual ministerial responsibility**, the convention by which a minister answers for the failures of the department they head. That is a **Westminster convention** inherited in practice, not an express constitutional mandate in India. Its force therefore depends entirely on political culture and, in a parliamentary system with a stable majority, on the Prime Minister's assessment.

Precedents

- **Lal Bahadur Shastri** resigned as Union Railway Minister after the **Ariyalur** rail accident in Tamil Nadu in **November 1956**, the case most often cited as the gold standard of ministerial accountability in India.
- **Madhavrao Scindia** resigned as Union Civil Aviation Minister in **1993**, owning moral responsibility for an aviation accident.
- **Nitish Kumar** resigned as Union Railway Minister after the **Gaisal** train disaster in Assam in **August 1999**.

Each precedent shares a feature worth noting for Mains answers: in none of them was the minister personally the cause of the failure. Each resignation asserted responsibility for a system, not guilt for an act.

THE ETHICAL DIMENSION

Role morality versus causal culpability. Causal culpability asks whether a person did the wrongful act. Role morality asks what a person owes by virtue of the office they occupy. A minister does not print question papers or transport them. Under a causal test, no minister is ever culpable for a leak. Under a role test, the minister is the constitutional custodian of a system on which lakhs of aspirants have staked years of preparation, and custodianship implies answerability when the system fails at scale.

Fiduciary duty of the State. An examination is the mechanism through which the State allocates scarce public goods, in this case medical seats, and therefore life chances. A candidate can neither verify the custody chain nor choose an alternative provider. That **asymmetry** creates a **fiduciary relationship**, and the standard applicable to a fiduciary is higher than ordinary administrative diligence.

Probity in governance. The **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)**, in its fourth report *Ethics in Governance* (2007), stressed institutional integrity mechanisms over individual virtue. Outcomes must be secured by design, through audit trails, separation of duties and independent oversight, rather than by trusting the character of every individual in the chain.

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

The **Dr K. Radhakrishnan Committee**, a seven-member panel constituted by the Ministry of Education in **June 2024** and reporting in **October 2024**, made **101 recommendations**, including sealing test centres in the presence of the district administration, reducing dependence on private test-delivery agencies, using Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas to build public digital testing infrastructure, and creating sub-committees on test audit, ethics and transparency. Its core recommendations were still only partially implemented when the 2026 leak occurred.

That record is the strongest argument against treating the Nilekani task force as a solution in itself. India's education governance has no shortage of expert reports; it has a shortage of implementation authority. A technocratic panel can design an architecture, but it cannot compel a society to adopt it, fund it or be audited against it.

The structural fix, therefore, is legal form before technology. Statutory status for the NTA, with a governing board of fixed tenure, mandatory public disclosure of audit findings, a defined candidate grievance and compensation mechanism, and an annual report laid before Parliament, would convert reform recommendations into enforceable obligations. Blockchain custody logs and AI-based proctoring are useful, but a tamper-evident log is only as valuable as the institution obliged to act on what it reveals.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies; Parliament and State legislatures, structure and functioning; Structure, organisation and functioning of the Executive; Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation; Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Education; Role of civil services in a democracy.

GS Paper 4: Ethics in public administration, status and problems; Accountability and ethical governance; Probity in Governance, concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Work culture, quality of service delivery; Utilisation of public funds; Corporate governance; Contribution of moral thinkers to the concept of duty.

Prelims pointers:

- The NTA was approved by the Union Cabinet in **2017** and is a **society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860**, under the Ministry of Education.
- The NTA conducts **NEET-UG, JEE (Main), UGC-NET and CUET**.
- The Nilekani task force has **six members** and was constituted on **26 July 2026**.
- **Nandan Nilekani** was Chairman of the **UIDAI** from **2009 to 2014**.
- **Article 75(2)** places Ministers in office during the pleasure of the President; **Article 75(3)** establishes collective responsibility to the Lok Sabha.
- The **UPSC** is a constitutional body under **Article 315**, with tenure protection under **Article 317**.
- **Lal Bahadur Shastri** resigned as Railway Minister after the **Ariyalur** accident of **November 1956**.
- **Nitish Kumar** resigned as Railway Minister after the **Gaisal** disaster of **August 1999**.
- The **Dr K. Radhakrishnan Committee**, constituted **June 2024** and reporting **October 2024**, made **101 recommendations** on NTA reform.
- NEET-UG 2026 was held on **3 May 2026** and the re-test on **21 June 2026**.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

NILEKANI TASK FORCE, 2026:

Constituted, 26 July 2026, by the Prime Minister

Strength, six members

Chair, Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys, Chairman of UIDAI from 2009 to 2014

Members, S. Somanath, former ISRO Chairman; Tapan Deka, former Director, Intelligence Bureau; Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras; Anita Karwal, former Secretary, School Education and Literacy; Amrit Lal Meena, 1989-batch IAS, former Chief Secretary of Bihar and former Coal Secretary

Mandate, structural, administrative and technology-driven reform of the NTA examination lifecycle

Named technologies, artificial intelligence and blockchain-based verification

Rollout target, CBT mode for NEET and other major examinations from 2027

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY:

Approved by Union Cabinet, 2017; registered as a society, 2018

Legal form, society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860

Parent ministry, Ministry of Education

Examinations, NEET-UG, JEE Main, UGC-NET, CUET

Earlier reform panel, Dr K. Radhakrishnan Committee, seven members, constituted June 2024, reported October 2024, 101 recommendations

NEET-UG 2026 TIMELINE:

Examination held, 3 May 2026

Examination cancelled after leak; case referred to the CBI

Re-test held, 21 June 2026; more than 20 lakh candidates

Agitation at Jantar Mantar from 20 June 2026; “Sansad Chalo” march, 20 July 2026

Monsoon Session 2026, 20 July to 13 August 2026

MINISTERIAL CHANGE:

Dharmendra Pradhan resigned as Union Education Minister, 25 July 2026

Resignation accepted by President Droupadi Murmu

Pralhad Joshi given charge of the Ministry of Education, took over 26 July 2026

Joshi retains Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and New and Renewable Energy

CONSTITUTIONAL ANCHORS:

Article 74(1), Council of Ministers to aid and advise the President

Article 75(1), appointment of Ministers on the advice of the Prime Minister

Article 75(2), Ministers hold office during the pleasure of the President

Article 75(3), collective responsibility to the House of the People

Article 78, Prime Minister communicates decisions of the Council to the President

Article 315, Union Public Service Commission as a constitutional body

Article 317, removal and tenure protection of UPSC members

KEY CONCEPTS:

Collective responsibility: the entire Council of Ministers stands or falls together before the Lok Sabha, an express mandate under Article 75(3).

Individual ministerial responsibility: a Westminster convention under which a minister answers for departmental failure; not expressly written into the Indian Constitution.

Role morality: the duties a person owes because of the office they hold, independent of personal causal fault.

Causal culpability: responsibility grounded in having personally caused the wrongful outcome.

Fiduciary duty: a heightened duty of care owed where one party controls an outcome the other cannot verify or avoid.

Statutory body: an institution created by an Act of the legislature, with powers, tenure and accountability defined by law.

Society: a body registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, created and reconstituted by executive action rather than by statute.

Computer-Based Testing: examination delivered digitally, permitting randomised question sets drawn from a secure item bank.

PRECEDENTS OF MINISTERIAL RESIGNATION:

Lal Bahadur Shastri, Railway Minister, Ariyalur rail accident, November 1956

Madhavrao Scindia, Civil Aviation Minister, 1993

Nitish Kumar, Railway Minister, Gaisal train disaster, August 1999

Sources: PIB, Ministry of Education, National Testing Agency, The Hindu

Source: NTA Overhaul and a Minister's Exit: The Nilekani Task Force and Ministerial Responsibility — Ujyari.com

| Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

RELATED EDITORIALS

BUSINESS STANDARD

[A Fresh Slate: Why Exam Integrity Needs Institutions, Not Resignations](#)

27 Jul

MINT

[The Democracy Quotient: Why India's Middle Power Moment Begins at Home](#)

27 Jul

THE HINDU

[Code as Contraband: When the State Takes Down an Architecture, Not a Post](#)

27 Jul

THE HINDU

[Law That Cannot Be Found: The Case for Open Legal Publishing](#)

27 Jul

RELATED KEY TERMS

KEY TERM

[16th Finance Commission](#)

The constitutional body chaired by Arvind Panagariya that recommends...

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...



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/07/27/nta-reform-nilekani-task-force-ministerial-responsibility-2026/>

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](#)

📌 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 · bharatnotes.com