

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY

(An Autonomous Organization under the Department of Higher Education,
Ministry of Education, Government of India)
First Floor, NSIC-MDBP Building, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi-110020
Website: www.nta.ac.in | E-mail: neetug@nta.ac.in

PRESS RELEASE

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NTA STATEMENT REGARDING THE ACTION ON TELEGRAM PLATFORM IN INDIA

1. The National Testing Agency (NTA) welcomes the directions issued today in respect of the Telegram platform in India. The directions, issued on recommendations of NTA are calibrated and bounded in time:
 - (a) a direction under Section 69 A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, restricting access to the Telegram platform in India for a defined and limited period ending 22 June 2026, covering the day of the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination and its immediate aftermath; and
 - (b) a direction requiring the platform to disable, in India, the message-editing feature in respect of messages already posted, for a defined period ending 30 June 2026, addressing the specific structural feature through which the platform has been used to fabricate after-the-event “paper leak” evidence in respect of national examinations.

Both measures have been taken in the interest of public order, in response to the organised use of the platform by cheating rackets to defraud candidates appearing for the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination scheduled on 21 June 2026. NTA expresses its gratitude to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for this timely action, in the interest of students, which will go a long way in helping NTA to be able to conduct safe and secure examinations on 21st June 2026.

2. Throughout the period leading up to the present action, the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), under the Ministry of Home Affairs, has served as the principal nodal agency coordinating the operational response to the Telegram-based fraud and misinformation targeting NEET (UG) 2026 candidates. Acting on inputs received continuously from NTA, from State law-enforcement agencies including the police forces of Bihar, Gujarat and Rajasthan, and from its own continuous monitoring of public channels and platforms, I4C has secured the prompt take-down of a substantial number of Telegram channels, groups and bots whose names and content openly advertised their

fraudulent and misleading purpose. This was done with active support of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. NTA places on record that the intelligence-sharing and coordinated take-down action led by the Ministry of Home Affairs, through I4C, and MeitY has been continuous, prompt and substantive, and remains the operational backbone of the response. This sustained inter-agency effort, well in advance of the present platform-level action, is the reason the harm caused by these rackets has been contained to the extent it has.

3. The directions issued today by MeitY have been made following references by NTA and the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, drawing attention to the structural limits of channel-by-channel action and seeking graduated platform-level compliance. The directions are a measure of last resort, taken only after intermediate remedies, including the take-down action coordinated by I4C, had been pursued and had not produced, at the platform level, the response required to protect candidates in the run-up to the examination. The calibration of the directions - a narrow platform-access restriction confined to the examination window, together with a feature-specific compliance direction for the post-examination period - reflects an effort to address the public-order concern with the minimum restriction necessary.
4. Over the preceding weeks, channels operating openly on the platform under names that themselves advertised their purpose - “PAPER LEAKED NEET”, “Re-NEET 2026”, “Private Mafia”, “REE NEET MAFIAA” and similar formulations - demanded sums ranging from a few thousand to several lakhs of rupees from candidates and their families, in exchange for purported access to the re-examination paper. NTA has placed on the record, and reiterates, that there is no such paper available outside the secured examination chain. The promise of any such material is, in every instance, a fraud.
5. The direction requiring Telegram to disable its message-editing feature in India through 30 June 2026 addresses a separate but related concern. The feature, in its present form, permits a channel administrator to edit the content of a previously posted message - including the substitution of attached files such as PDFs - while the original send-time stamp is retained. This capability has been used, in respect of multiple recent examinations, to fabricate after-the-event “paper leak” artefacts: a channel administrator edits an older, innocuous message to insert the actual question paper after the examination has been conducted, and the resulting chat is then circulated as purported “evidence” that the paper was in circulation before the examination. The MeitY direction closes this avenue of fabrication for the post-examination window in which such artefacts have historically been deployed.
6. Independent action by State law-enforcement agencies has, over the same period, reinforced the scale and seriousness of the concern. The Bihar Police Economic Offences Unit issued a formal public advisory on 9 June 2026, warning candidates against fraudulent claims

of pre-examination access to the paper circulated through Telegram and other platforms. The Ahmedabad City Cyber Crime Branch arrested members of an inter-State cyber-fraud gang found to be operating eight Telegram channels in furtherance of the same modus operandi, with documented transactions of approximately ₹1.5 crore routed through fraudulent bank accounts and approximately one thousand mobile numbers contacted in a single month. Investigations are in progress in multiple other States.

7. NTA acknowledges that the access restriction issued by MeitY affects lakhs of citizens who use the Telegram platform for legitimate personal, educational, professional and informational purposes, and sincerely regrets the inconvenience caused to them. The access restriction is, by its express terms, confined to the period ending 22 June 2026 - i.e. the day after the examination. The feature-specific direction in respect of the message-editing function, which remains in force through 30 June 2026, does not affect ordinary use of the platform for sending or receiving new messages.
8. The NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination will be conducted as scheduled on 21 June 2026. The security of the examination is unaffected by the action taken; it is, in fact, the very purpose of the action. Every candidate and parent is reassured of NTA's commitment to conducting a fair, secure and credible examination. Candidates are urged to focus on their preparation, to disregard unverified content circulating on any platform, and to rely exclusively on the NTA website (www.neet.nta.nic.in) and verified NTA handles for all examination-related updates.
9. Any encounter with fraudulent solicitations - in person, by telephone, or through any online platform - should be reported immediately to the National Cyber-Crime Helpline at 1930, or through the National Cyber-Crime Reporting Portal at cybercrime.gov.in. NTA's own helplines remain available at 011-40759000 / 011-69227700 and at neetug@nta.ac.in.
10. NTA places on record its sincere appreciation of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for the timely and calibrated directions issued, of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre for the sustained operational coordination that has made today's action possible, of the Central Bureau of Investigation for its parallel inquiry into the underlying offences, and of the police forces of Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan and other States for their independent enforcement action - each of which has contributed, in its own measure, to protecting the integrity of one of the country's most consequential examinations and the interests of its candidates.

— Issued by the National Testing Agency