

# Addapedia Editorial Analysis 22nd June 2024

## NEET Exam

(The Hindu, 22/06/24)

The NEET UG 2024 exam in India has been embroiled in controversy since the results were announced in June.

- An unprecedented 67 students achieved perfect scores, raising suspicions of systemic manipulation.
- Additionally, over 1,560 students received grace marks over delays in receiving the question paper at some centers. However, this was done without transparency, further eroding confidence in the National Testing Agency (NTA).

### What is NEET Exam?

- NEET stands for **National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate)**.
- It's a gateway exam in India for aspirants aiming to pursue undergraduate medical programs (MBBS, BDS etc.) in government and private medical colleges across the country.
- It's conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) every year.
  - Prior to 2019, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) was responsible for conducting NEET.
- As per the Medical Council of India's official data, 272 government MBBS colleges will offer a total of 41,388 medical seats to the candidates through NEET 2024, while 76,928 seats will be allotted through NEET in 532 government and private colleges.
- In Indian government medical colleges, MBBS seats are divided into two categories: All India Quota (AIQ) and state quota.
  - A maximum of 15% of seats in each MBBS government college is reserved for AIQ seats, which are allocated through counselling conducted by the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC).
  - The remaining 85% of seats, known as state quota seats, are allocated to candidates domiciled in that state who meet the eligibility criteria.

### What were the reasons for introducing NEET?

NEET was implemented to address several issues in medical college admissions in India. These included:

- **Uniformity in Medical Entrance Examinations:** NEET was introduced to replace multiple entrance exams conducted by various states and institutions. This aimed to

standardize the admission process for undergraduate (MBBS/BDS) and postgraduate medical courses across the country.

- **Reducing Stress and Financial Burden:** Multiple entrance exams required students to prepare for different syllabi and formats, leading to increased stress and financial burden. NEET simplified the process by providing a single exam with a common syllabus, reducing the number of tests students needed to take.
- **Ensuring Merit-Based Admissions:** NEET aimed to ensure that admissions to medical colleges were based on merit, reducing the influence of donations or capitation fees. This was intended to make the admission process more transparent and fair.
- **Combating Malpractices:** The introduction of NEET sought to curb malpractices and irregularities in the admission process. By having a single, standardized test, the scope for manipulation and corruption was expected to decrease.
- **Facilitating Mobility of Students:** NEET enabled students to apply for medical colleges in different states without the need for multiple entrance exams. This increased the mobility of students and allowed them to seek admission in colleges outside their home state.

#### **What were the Challenges and/or criticism of NEET?**

- **Resistance from States:** Some states argue that NEET undermines their autonomy in conducting entrance exams tailored to their specific educational contexts and needs. States with well-established entrance systems have resisted adopting NEET.
- **Different Educational Boards:** The curriculum and difficulty level of state board exams differ from the CBSE curriculum on which NEET is based. This creates a disparity for students from different educational backgrounds.
- **Urban-Rural Divide:** Students from rural areas often lack access to the same level of educational resources and coaching facilities as those in urban areas, creating an uneven playing field.
- **Logistical Issues:** Conducting a nationwide exam for such a large number of students poses logistical challenges, including issues with exam centers, question paper leaks, and technical glitches.
- **Exam-Only Focus:** The focus on a single exam score can overshadow other aspects of a student's academic and personal development.

*Can you answer the following question?*

*Critically analyze the impact of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) on the medical education system in India. Discuss the benefits and challenges associated with its implementation.*

**New Cold War**

**(The Hindu, 22/06/24)**

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a “comprehensive strategic” partnership deal with North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang

- Putin was on a two-day visit to North Korea – his first in 24 years – and signed the deal that has been hailed as the “strongest between Moscow and Pyongyang since the end of the Cold War”

### **What are the historical relations between Russia and North Korea?**

- Ties between Pyongyang and Moscow go back to the Soviet times. The Soviet Union was the first nation to recognise North Korea, when it came into existence in 1948.
- Moscow supported North Korea in the 1950-53 Korean War while the U.S. supported South Korea.
- Initially robust, relations between the countries declined as the rift between China and Russia grew after the Korean War ended.
- The Soviet Union also established diplomatic relations with the South Korea, further isolating North Korea in the region. Russia, which succeeded the Soviet Union, continued these diplomatic relations.
- Putin’s election as President of Russia in 2000, however, somewhat turned the tide in favour of North Korea.
- In 2012, Russia agreed to write off 90% of North Korea’s estimated \$11 billion debt, although Russia supported UN Security Council sanctions against the North between 2016 and 2017 as Kim Jong-un accelerated the country’s nuclear and missile tests.
- In July 2022, North Korea recognised Donetsk and Luhansk, in Ukraine’s Donbas region, as independent States after Russia and Syria did so. (Both these regions were annexed by Russia in September that year.
- It is believed that North Korea has been supplying Russia artillery, missiles and other military equipment for use in Ukraine. In exchange, North Korea is leveraging high-tech nuclear weapons and missile technologies from Russia.

### **What does the new deal entail?**

- Military alliance: Provides immediate military aid if either country is attacked. Both say the deal is in alignment with Article 51 of the U.N. charter (dealing with self-defence).
- Deeper strategic partnership: Aims to build a "new world order" and strengthen defence capabilities
- Economic cooperation: Includes food assistance for North Korea.

### **What does the deal mean in the current geopolitical context?**

- Both countries are facing international isolation, particularly from the West led by the United States . This pact is seen as a way for them to show solidarity **and push back against Western influence.**
- Some fear this agreement might embolden North Korea to pursue its nuclear program that can lead to further **instability in the region.**

- Russia's strained relationship with Japan may worsen, and ties with South Korea could deteriorate.
- Additionally, the agreement is likely to strengthen the tripartite partnership among Japan, South Korea, and the U.S., further solidifying the early stages of a new cold war between major powers