



Sanskriti IAS

13th May 2026



IMPORTANT

EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

DELHI CENTRE:
636, Mukherjee Nagar
New Delhi-110009

PRAYAGRAJ CENTRE:
1/1/8A, Stanley Rd,
Maharana Pratap Chauraha,
Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP - 211002

 **9555-124-124**

 **sanskritiias.com**

GS 2: GOVERNANCE INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 1

EXAM CANCELLED BECAUSE PROCESS WAS FOUND TO HAVE BEEN VITIATED: NTA CHIEF

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

Over 22 lakh affected; NTA says new exam date soon; one held in Nashik

Abhinaya Harigovind & Mahender Singh Manral
New Delhi, May 12

IN A move affecting over 22 lakh candidates, the National Testing Agency (NTA) Tuesday cancelled the NEET-UG exam for admission to undergraduate medical courses, nine days after it was held on May 3, following an alleged paper leak—the first time such a decision has been taken by the agency since the exam was introduced in 2016.

The NTA said the exam, which is the largest it conducts in terms of students appearing in a single session, will be held again on dates to be notified separately even as the Centre handed over the paper-leak probe to the CBI.

The cancellation triggered protests by student organisations, mainly in Delhi and Kerala, and drew sharp criticism from the Opposition, which accused the Government of crushing the “hard work, sacrifices, and dreams of more than 22 lakh students”. Around 22.7 lakh candidates had registered

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Accused Shubham Khaimar being taken into custody by CBI officials in Nashik, Tuesday. ANI

A ‘whistleblower’, a paid WhatsApp group, ‘guess paper’ that did rounds

Hamza Khan
Jaipur, May 12

THE UNRAVELLING of a suspected leak in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG), 2026, in Rajasthan began with an automated fine print on a WhatsApp message: “Forwarded many times.” When investigators following the trail of a “guess paper” stumbled upon this WhatsApp message, they realised that what they hoped was an isolated leak was

INSIDE
STUDENTS DEJECTED: ‘FEELS LIKE GOD KEEPS TESTING ME’
PAGES 4, 9

much larger in scale. Officials of the Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG), which had been investigating the case before the CBI took charge on Tuesday, said

that they found a WhatsApp group named ‘Private Mafia’, where the said paper was being circulated and had members who had paid various amounts, beginning from around Rs 5,000, to join the group. However, despite strict “instructions” from the group administrators not to share the paper, it was circulated far and wide.

Officials said that preliminary investigation had indicated that the paper may have

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

After last leak, ex-ISRO chief panel had called for reforms; all gather dust

Abhinaya Harigovind & Anonna Dutt
New Delhi, May 12

WHILE THIS is the first time that the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG), for admission to undergraduate medical education, is being cancelled over an alleged paper leak, there have been claims of malpractices and breaches before.

Under fire over an alleged NEET-UG paper leak in 2024, the BJP-led government, which had just returned to power then for a third term, had constituted a high-level committee of experts led by former ISRO Chairman K Radhakrishnan to recommend reforms in the examination process, and improve security protocol.

In its October 2024 report submitted to the Education Ministry, the committee had presented a detailed set of recommendations. But, nearly two years after a CBI probe found that candidates allegedly

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

GS 3: INDIAN ECONOMY
INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 1

DOWN ALMOST 5% SINCE START OF WEST ASIA WAR

As rupee falls to record low of 95.63, CEA flags: Stopping further fall a key imperative

Says structural shifts in global economic order not going to reverse



CEA V Anantha Nageswaran at a CII event in New Delhi. PTI

Siddharth Upasani
New Delhi, May 12

ON THE day the rupee hit an all-time low of 95.75 per dollar before closing at 95.63, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran, while warning that ongoing structural shifts in the global economic order were not going to reverse, said Tuesday that stopping the rupee from falling further was one of the "central macroeconomic imperatives" of the current fiscal.

Speaking at the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) annual business summit in New Delhi, Nageswaran said,

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

ECONOMY

MARKETS SLUMP FOR SECOND DAY

PAGE 13



Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri with CII president Rajiv Memani at the CII Annual Business Summit in New Delhi, Tuesday. ANI

Puri: Govt will have to weigh how long oil firms can suffer losses

Sukalp Sharma
New Delhi, May 12

THE GOVERNMENT will have to "take a view" at some point on how long public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) can continue to suffer losses by selling major fuels below market price, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Tuesday, but did not comment on whether a fuel price hike is on the cards.

While he assured that there are adequate stocks of petrol, diesel and cooking gas for regular supplies, Puri said the global energy crisis due to the West Asia war and the consequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz is leading to significant financial strain for

Business as Usual

By EPUNNY

Switched off the grand swearing-in telecast and saved energy.



the OMCs, with combined losses of the three refiners-cum-fuel

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

GS 3: INDIAN ECONOMY

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 1

Rupee

“Managing the current account credibly, financing it, and preventing further currency depreciation are the central macroeconomic imperatives of FY27.” He said India’s exposure to the West Asia crisis was “structural” and presented a “live Balance of Payments stress test, with direct consequences for inflation, the current account, and the exchange rate.”

The remarks by the government’s top economist came on the day the rupee hit another all-time low, falling to as much as 95.75 per dollar during the day before closing at 95.63 — the lowest it has ever ended a session. Since the war in West Asia began, the rupee has slumped by almost 5% against the US dollar and has been Asia’s worst performing currency so far in 2026 — a period in which it has fallen by 6%.

The war has sent shockwaves through energy importing nations, especially those in Asia, with currencies weakening as foreign investors pull out money — although some countries have benefited due to sectors, particularly those related to Artificial Intelligence, performing well.

India, which is widely considered to have low exposure to AI, has seen Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) exit domestic financial markets to the tune of \$23 billion since the start of the war, putting pressure on the Balance of Payments.

The Balance of Payments is

the difference between the money Indians send abroad to pay for various things such as imports and investments and the money India receives from overseas for exports and in the form of remittances and capital flows.

With the import bill widening due to sharply high crude oil and gold prices, exports affected by weak global demand, FDI inflows muted, and remittances from West Asia under threat, economists are warning that India’s Balance of Payments could be in the negative zone for a third straight year in FY27.

BofA Securities economists Rahul Bajoria and Smriti Mehra, in a report Tuesday, said, “India’s current account deficit appears set to exceed ~2% of GDP — which the RBI has historically identified as the threshold level that India can finance sustainably over the long term. However, in recent years, even a 1% of GDP has been difficult to finance due to a confluence of factors in the capital and financial account leading to persistent weakness in the exchange rate.”

And Nageswaran, while pointing out that since the start of the US and Israel’s attack on Iran, Brent crude futures prices were up 51%, urea and ammonia prices 65%, and butane 51%, said these numbers were not of a “temporary shock that will self-correct when the situation stabilises” and that it would be a “strategic error” for emerging economies to make plans for the future on the assumption that the pre-2020 global economic architecture will re-assert itself.

GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE HINDU PAGE: 4

China's Foreign Minister set to skip BRICS meet in Delhi

Beijing cites 'scheduling reasons' and states that Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong will be present; it expresses readiness to work with all BRICS members to support India as the Chair

Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

There will be no high-level representation from Beijing at Thursday's meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers in New Delhi because of "scheduling reasons", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday.

The May 14-15 meeting coincides with the visit to China by U.S. President Donald Trump, who lands in the Chinese capital on Wednesday. Foreign Minister Wang Yi will be in Beijing for Mr. Trump's visit. China will not be sending any other high-level official for the meeting, the Foreign Ministry indicated.

"Due to scheduling reasons, Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong will represent Foreign Minister Wang Yi at this Foreign Ministers' Meeting," the Foreign Ministry said, adding that "China attaches great importance to and actively



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on July 14, 2025. AP

participates in BRICS cooperation, and is always committed to deepening the BRICS strategic partnership and consolidating the positive momentum of unity and cooperation among BRICS countries."

"We stand ready to work with all BRICS members to support India, as the Chair, in successfully hosting the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting and promoting the high-quality development

of 'BRICS Plus' cooperation," the statement said.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal said on Tuesday at a weekly press briefing that the meeting scheduled for May 14-15 will be chaired by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. Visiting Foreign Ministers and heads of delegations from member and partner countries, including Russian Foreign Minister Ser-

gey Lavrov and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, will also call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The discussions will focus on pressing global and regional issues of mutual concern among member states of BRICS," Mr. Jaiswal said, adding that the second day would see discussions on reviewing the group's evolution and future direction, and reforms of global governance and the multilateral system. The gathering this week takes place against the backdrop of the crisis in West Asia and divisions within the grouping, leading to doubts over whether the meeting will yield a joint statement. A meeting in New Delhi last month of Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys of the 11-nation BRICS grouping ended without a joint statement, as delegates from the United Arab Emirates and Iran sparred over the war in West Asia.

GS 3: ENVIRONMENT

THE HINDU PAGE: 8

Managing coexistence in human-wildlife conflict zones

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is often framed as a conservation problem. In reality, it is a complex socio-ecological challenge shaped by land use, livelihoods and ecological change. Across continents, interactions between people and wildlife are becoming more frequent and more intense, not because animals are encroaching on human space alone, but because human activity is rapidly transforming natural habitats.

In India, hundreds of people die each year in encounters with elephants, while large numbers of livestock are lost to predators. Similar patterns are reported in parts of Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. These conflicts reflect deeper pressures such as habitat fragmentation, agricultural expansion and changing land use. Where biodiversity overlaps with dense human settlement, conflict becomes almost inevitable.

A reflection of ecological imbalance

Geographically, the most severe conflicts occur in South and Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya and Tanzania face recurring challenges involving elephants, big cats and other large mammals. These species require extensive ranges and seasonal movement corridors. When forests are cleared, roads constructed or farms expanded, these natural pathways are disrupted. Wildlife then adapts, often by moving into agricultural landscapes or peri-urban areas in search of food and shelter.

Importantly, animal behaviour in such contexts is rarely "aggressive" in intent. Crop raiding by elephants or livestock predation by carnivores are adaptive responses to ecological constraints. Monkeys and wild boars exploit easily available food near forest edges, while predators turn to livestock when natural prey declines. These patterns reflect ecological imbalance rather than aberrant animal behaviour.

Global responses to HWC show that coexistence is possible when policy moves beyond reactive measures. In Africa, Botswana and Namibia have implemented



Vinaya Kumar H.M.

Assistant Professor,
Keladi Shivappa
Nayaka University
of Agricultural and
Horticultural Sciences,
Shivamogga,
Karnataka



Aishwarya P.

Assistant Conservator
of Forests, Forest,
Environment and
Ecology Department,
Government
of Karnataka

The approach should be scientifically informed, socially just, and ecologically sustainable

community-based natural resource management systems, where local communities share tourism revenues and gain rights over wildlife use. This aligns conservation goals with economic incentives, reducing hostility toward wildlife. In central America in Costa Rica, ecological corridors are integrated into national planning to maintain habitat connectivity. Finland combines real-time wildlife monitoring with rapid compensation systems, reducing both risk and resentment.

These approaches share three key features: strong local participation, reliable economic support and the use of ecological data for planning; they treat conflict as a shared management issue rather than a law-and-order problem.

The complexities in India

In India, significant efforts have been made to address HWC through compensation schemes, technological interventions and legal frameworks. However, given the scale and complexity of the challenge, there remains scope to further strengthen implementation. Compensation mechanisms, while well-intentioned, can benefit from greater timeliness, enhanced coverage and improved accessibility for marginalised communities. Similarly, measures such as solar fencing and early-warning systems have shown context-specific success, but their effectiveness depends on better coordination and ecological planning.

At the policy level, India's legal framework has played a crucial role in wildlife conservation. Going forward, there is scope to better align these frameworks with the evolving realities of human-wildlife interfaces. As land-use patterns and ecological pressures change, adaptive, locally responsive governance approaches can help strengthen coexistence outcomes.

There is a need to carefully assess the practicality and long-term effectiveness of proposed interventions. Suggestions such as fertility control in wild elephants have

occasionally entered public debate; however, experts note that such measures have limited applicability beyond small, intensively managed populations. In the Indian context, where elephants range across vast and fragmented landscapes, the key challenge remains habitat loss, increasing competition for food and water, and growing human-wildlife interface. Therefore, lasting solutions must focus on habitat restoration, ecological connectivity, and community-based conflict mitigation rather than isolated technical fixes.

Evidence from Bhutan and Nepal shows that locally grounded solutions can reduce conflict. Community-managed forests, coordinated grazing and predator-proof livestock enclosures have shown positive results, supported by stable conservation funding mechanisms.

Focus on education and awareness

Climate change is likely to intensify HWC by altering resource availability and forcing both humans and wildlife to adapt. This adds urgency to the need for a shift in perspective. Wildlife cannot be treated as an external threat to be controlled, nor can human livelihoods be side-lined in the name of conservation.

The way forward lies in designing landscapes that accommodate both. This includes securing wildlife corridors, improving land-use planning, strengthening compensation systems, and involving communities as active partners in conservation. Education and awareness can also play a role in rebuilding tolerance and understanding.

HWC is not an anomaly. It is a predictable outcome of how we use land and resources. The challenge is not to eliminate conflict entirely, but to manage it in ways that are scientifically informed, socially just and ecologically sustainable. If approached thoughtfully, coexistence is not only possible, but it is also essential for the future of both people and wildlife.

The views expressed are personal

GS 3: INDIAN ECONOMY

THE HINDU PAGE: 12

What trade deals promise are far from reality: CEA

There is a 'substantial' gap between what FTAs promise and what regulations currently permit, warns CEA Anantha Nageswaran, days after EU envoy's similar statement on compliance issues

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) create value only once they are implemented not when they are signed, Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran asserted on Tuesday, warning that there is a "substantial" gap between what the trade deals promise and what the regulatory frameworks actually allow.

Mr. Nageswaran's comments come days after the European Union's Ambassador to India too warned that compliance issues could still derail the benefits of the India-EU FTA.

During his speech at the Confederation of Indian Industry's Annual Business Summit 2026, Mr. Nageswaran said that the nine trade agreements and comprehensive economic



Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran at the CII's Annual Business Summit 2026, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

partnerships that India had entered into in the last five years "represent the most concentrated burst of trade diplomacy in independent India's history".

Statements of intent

He added that the frameworks with the United Kingdom, European Union, EFTA, U.S., Oman, New Zealand and Australia

were not merely commercial arrangements.

"They represent a diversification of economic relationships that is simultaneously a statement of strategic intent that India will expand its economic footprint across multiple geographies, reducing dependence on any single market or corridor," he said. However, he also not-

ed that such agreements created value only at implementation, not at signing.

"The gap between the frameworks we have concluded and the depth of integration they would actually permit if the regulatory standards and procedural barriers on both sides were seriously addressed remains substantial," Mr. Nageswaran noted.

"The imperative is to close that gap with the same urgency that was brought to the conclusion of the agreement themselves," he added.

At a separate industry event last week, the EU's Ambassador to India Hervé Delphin pointed out that customs procedures or conformity requirements should serve their purpose and not be used as trade barriers.