

AS INTRODUCED IN THE RAJYA SABHA
ON THE 5TH DECEMBER, 2025

Bill No. XLVI of 2024

**THE PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS (PREVENTION OF
UNFAIR MEANS) AMENDMENT BILL, 2024**

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BILL

to amend the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows: –

1. (1) This Act may be called the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Act, 2024.

Short title and commencement.

5 **(2)** It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

“10. (1) Any person or persons resorting to unfair means and offences under this Act, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than seven years but which may extend to life imprisonment and with fine up to two crore rupees:

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Provided that in case of default of payment of fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed, as per the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023:

45 of 2023.

Provided further that until the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 is brought into force, the provisions of the Indian Penal Code, shall be applicable in place of the said Act.

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45 of 2023.
45 of 1860.

(2) The service provider shall also be liable to be punished with imposition of a fine up to five crore rupees and proportionate cost of examination shall also be recovered from such service provider and he shall also be barred from being assigned with any responsibility for the conduct of any public examination for a period of ten years.

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(3) Where it is established during the investigation that offence under this Act has been committed with the consent or connivance of any Director, Senior Management or the persons in-charge of the service provider firm, he shall be liable for imprisonment for a term not less than seven years but which may extend to life imprisonment and with fine of ten crore rupees:

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Provided that in case of default of payment of fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed as per the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023:

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45 of 2023.

Provided further that until the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 is brought into force, the provisions of the Indian Penal Code, shall be applicable in place of the said Act.

45 of 2023.
45 of 1860.

(4) Nothing contained in this section shall render any such person liable to any punishment under the Act, if he proves, that the offence was committed without his knowledge and that he exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.”

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STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 was enacted to prevent “unfair means” in order to “bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility to the public examinations system”.

The occurrences of paper-leaks have made the stakeholders put a question mark on the credibility of the competitive and higher-education exams. India for years has seen around seventy paper-leaks in the last seven years across fifteen States. The recent alleged NEET-UG 2024 and UGC-NET paper leak reportedly affecting twenty-four lakh aspirants, has brought to the fore excessive control of the paper leak mafia over exams in India. These leaks disrupted the schedules of 1.7 crore applicants and there are wide-spread protests over the alleged malpractices in the NEET entrance exams.

As per reports, paper leaks over the last five years have resulted in forty-one recruitment exams across fifteen States being cancelled, hampering the employment hopes of 1.4 crore applicants. In the case of NEET itself, the Central Bureau of Investigation is probing alleged irregularities in the examinations held in 2018, 2021 and 2022. The scale of paper leaks in India is huge. The paper-leak industry is a well-oiled one, destroying the dreams of crores of students and job aspirants in the last five years alone.

However, the current law prescribes a maximum imprisonment of five years for persons who are found guilty of paper leak. Considering the gravity of the offence and the amount of damage it does to the career prospects and livelihoods of youth of the country, it is imperative that the quantum of punishment is increased to serve as a deterrent and instill fear in the minds of the people who commit this crime.

The punishment prescribed in the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 is much lesser than the anti-cheating law of various State Governments. Therefore, this Bill proposes to enhance the minimum punishment to seven years and a maximum of life imprisonment for paper leak and also seeks to increase the fine to rupees two crore.

Hence, this Bill.

RAGHAV CHADHA.

ANNEXURE

**EXTRACT FROM THE PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS
(PREVENTION OF UNFAIR
MEANS) ACT, 2024**

[1 OF 2024]

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Punishment for
offences under
this Act.

10.(1) Any person or persons resorting to unfair means and offences under this Act, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than three years but which may extend to five years and with fine up to ten lakh rupees. In case of default of payment of fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed, as per the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023:

45 of 2023.

Provided that until the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 is brought into force, the provisions of the Indian Penal Code, shall be applicable in place of the said Act.

45 of 2023.

45 of 1860.

(2) The service provider shall also be liable to be punished with imposition of a fine up to one crore rupees and proportionate cost of examination shall also be recovered from such service provider and he shall also be barred from being assigned with any responsibility for the conduct of any public examination for a period of four years.

(3) Where it is established during the investigation that offence under this Act has been committed with the consent or connivance of any Director, Senior Management or the persons in-charge of the service provider firm, he shall be liable for imprisonment for a term not less than three years but which may extend to ten years and with fine of one crore rupees. In case of default of payment of fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed as per the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023:

45 of 2023.

Provided that until the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 is brought into force, the provisions of the Indian Penal Code, shall be applicable in place of the said Act.

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(4) Nothing contained in this section shall render any such person liable to any punishment under the Act, if he proves, that the offence was committed without his knowledge and that he exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.

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RAJYA SABHA

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BILL

to amend the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.

(Shri Raghav Chadha, M.P.)