

SURYA LAW ACADEMY – SESSION 2026-27
SLA CLAT UG PATTERN MOCK TEST 26

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Total Questions: 120 Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs)
- Total Duration: 2 Hours (120 Minutes)
- Marking Scheme:
 - +1 mark for each correct answer
 - -0.25 marks for each wrong answer
 - 0 marks for un-attempted questions

PART 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE (Q1-Q24)

PASSAGE 1 (Q1-Q6)

Topic: Fiction — *Guilt and a Chance Encounter*

The astrologer set up his seat every evening beneath the spreading tamarind tree at the crowded junction, his cloth spread out with cowrie shells, a palm-leaf bundle, and a square of cheap cloth painted with mystic diagrams he himself did not fully understand. He had never studied the stars in any real sense. His whole trade was conducted on a shrewd reading of faces and a talent for letting a worried customer supply the very facts he would later present back to them as revelation. Business was thin that evening, and he was folding his cloth to leave when a stranger, chewing betel leaf and lit only by the flare of a nearby vendor's lamp, planted himself down and threw a coin at him with a challenge: tell him something true, or return the coin twice over.

Something in the stranger's voice unsettled the astrologer, though he could not yet see the man's face clearly. He tried to excuse himself, but the stranger would not let him go, and the wager itself was too tempting to refuse on a poor night's earnings. He asked the man to strike a match so that he could "read" his palm properly. In that brief flare of light, the astrologer's whole body went cold with recognition — a face out of his past, one he had spent decades and a change of town trying to forget.

Recovering his composure, he told the stranger a story that sounded like divination: that many years ago he had been stabbed and left for dead near a well in his native village; that the man who did it believed him dead and had fled, and had himself died a miserable death soon after. He advised the stranger never to travel south again and to go home to his family at once. The stranger, stunned at being told the one fact he had never spoken aloud to anyone, paid gladly and left transformed. Only that night, lying beside his sleeping wife, did the astrologer allow himself to say aloud what he had carried alone for thirty years — that he was the man who had once driven a knife into another man and run, believing himself a murderer, until the night a stranger sat down at his stall and turned out to be very much alive.

Source: Original narrative adapted from the situation of "An Astrologer's Day" by R.K. Narayan (title story of *An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories*, 1947).

QUESTIONS

- Q1.** What can most reasonably be inferred about why the astrologer's "whole body went cold with recognition" in the match's brief flare?
- (A) A former client who once accused him of fraud
 - (B) The man he believed he had killed decades earlier
 - (C) A rival astrologer from his native village
 - (D) A debt collector pursuing an old unpaid loan
- Q2.** The passage suggests that what made the astrologer's prophecy so convincing to the stranger was chiefly that:
- (A) it used far more elaborate mystical props than his usual readings
 - (B) it flattered the stranger's private pride in having survived such hardship
 - (C) it was delivered in a louder, more dramatic tone than usual
 - (D) it named a fact the astrologer had never been told
- Q3.** Why does the astrologer frame what he tells the stranger as a "revelation" rather than simply confessing what he knows?
- (A) To disguise himself as the attacker while winning the wager
 - (B) To charge a considerably higher fee for a more dramatic performance
 - (C) To test whether the stranger truly believed in fate
 - (D) To avoid contradicting the pattern on his painted cloth
- Q4.** The narrator's tone in recounting the astrologer's fraudulent trade and hidden past is best described as:
- (A) openly mocking and contemptuous of his dishonesty
 - (B) coldly clinical, withholding all judgment
 - (C) quietly ironic and sympathetic rather than condemning
 - (D) anxious and moralizing about the dangers of fraud
- Q5.** In the context of the passage, "composure" (as in "Recovering his composure, he told the stranger a story") most nearly means:
- (A) a burst of sudden inspiration
 - (B) confidence in his mystical props
 - (C) physical strength to continue working
 - (D) calm self-control regained after a shock
- Q6.** The detail that "something in the stranger's voice unsettled the astrologer" before he could even see the

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man's face is best described as an instance of which literary device?

- (A) Foreshadowing an unwelcome recognition to come
- (B) Hyperbole exaggerating a minor discomfort
- (C) Personification giving human feeling to an object
- (D) Irony contrasting what is said with what is meant

PASSAGE 2 (Q7-Q12)

Topic: Fiction — *An Unreliable Narrator's Confession*

True — I had been nervous, dreadfully nervous, but why would anyone call me mad? The disease had only sharpened my senses, not destroyed them. I loved the old man; he had never wronged me; I wanted none of his gold. It was his eye that tormented me — a pale, filmy, vulture eye — and once the idea of ridding myself of it had taken hold, it left me no rest, day or night, until the thing was done.

For seven nights I opened his chamber door, so slowly that not even a hinge complained, and held my lantern so that a single ray fell only upon that hateful eye, while the old man slept on, unaware how close he sat to his own end. On the eighth night my hand slipped on the fastening, and he awoke and sat up in bed, listening as I had so often listened myself, to the terrors of the dark. I held still for a long hour and heard, at last, a low, dull, quick sound — his heart, beating faster and faster with dread of a danger it could not name. When the ray finally found the eye open and staring, I could bear it no longer, and dragged him to the floor and ended it, then took him apart limb by limb and hid every trace of him beneath the planks of that very room.

When the officers came, summoned by a neighbour who had heard a single cry in the night, I welcomed them in myself, smiling, and set their chairs directly over the spot where he lay. I answered their questions cheerfully, even gaily, for I had nothing left to fear — until, beneath the pleasant sound of my own voice, I began to hear it again: a low, dull, quick sound, growing steadily louder, keeping pace with my own quickening pulse, until it seemed the officers themselves must hear it and knew that they were only pretending not to. Unable to endure the sound and the smiles on their faces a moment longer, I shrieked at them to tear up the planks — for it was there, it was his hideous heart, that I heard beating still.

Source: Original narrative adapted from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843, public domain).

QUESTIONS

Q7. The narrator opens by insisting his disease had "only sharpened" his senses. What does the passage as a whole suggest about that claim?

- (A) It is confirmed by his calm composure before the officers
- (B) It is undercut by the hallucination that finally overwhelms him
- (C) It explains only his quiet movements over seven nights
- (D) It reflects a medical diagnosis he once received

Q8. According to the passage, what most immediately drove the narrator to shriek out his confession?

- (A) A direct accusation of murder made by one officer
- (B) The neighbour returning to reveal where the body lay
- (C) His belief that the officers' smiles concealed real knowledge
- (D) A visible reappearance of the old man before him

Q9. What does the narrator's decision to seat the officers directly above the hidden body chiefly reveal about his state of mind at that moment?

- (A) A reckless overconfidence bordering on self-destruction
- (B) Genuine indifference to the killing he had committed
- (C) A calculated plan to have the body discovered
- (D) Growing suspicion that the officers already knew everything

Q10. The narrator's tone across his account of the killing and its aftermath is best described as:

- (A) openly remorseful and apologetic throughout
- (B) frantic and incoherent from the very first line
- (C) coldly indifferent, showing no feeling of any kind
- (D) eerily composed and self-justifying despite the horror described

Q11. In the context of the passage, "gaily" (as in "I answered their questions cheerfully, even gaily") most nearly means:

- (A) with visible nervousness and dread
- (B) with loud, aggressive defiance
- (C) with light, unconcerned cheerfulness
- (D) with reluctant, forced politeness

Q12. The recurring "low, dull, quick sound" that grows louder through the final scene functions primarily as:

- (A) A literal clue that helps the officers find the body
- (B) A symbol of his own mounting, unacknowledged guilt
- (C) A red herring meant to mislead readers about the killer
- (D) Proof that the old man had survived the attack

PASSAGE 3 (Q13-Q18)

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Topic: History of Ideas — Reading the Body's Signs

Physicians have long dismissed palmistry as a parlour trick, a superstition dressed up in the language of fate. Yet the boundary between the fortune-teller reading a palm and the clinician reading a patient has never been as clean as modern medicine likes to imagine, because both are engaged in the same basic act: interpreting a mark on the body as a sign of something the mark itself does not announce outright. Centuries before laboratory diagnostics existed, a scholar remembered chiefly for his work on gravity and optics owned a seventeenth-century treatise that treated the creases of the hand as a kind of geometry to be decoded, while physicians of the same broad period wrote texts blending what we would now separate firmly into "natural magic" and "medical observation" — because at the time, no such separation was thought necessary.

The nineteenth century did not close that gap so much as relocate it. One widely read anatomical treatise on the hand framed its structure as evidence of a benevolent design, while a rival and far more consequential book of the same century recast the hand's freedom from locomotion as the pivot on which human evolution itself turned. A Central European anatomist studying the creases of the palm moved fluently between the vocabulary of formal anatomy and the vocabulary of traditional palm-reading, as though the two were simply different dialects describing the same terrain.

The twentieth century supplied the payoff. A physician who collected handprints from primates — including, notoriously, the print of a great ape taken after its death — was struck by a single crease running unbroken across the palm in certain of her human subjects, a mark folk tradition had long associated with particular temperaments. A geneticist later correlated that same visible mark with an underlying chromosomal condition, and when the condition's chromosomal basis was confirmed in a laboratory in 1959, it vindicated, entirely by accident, decades of a sign that palmists had been "reading" without ever knowing why it mattered. One physician of the 1920s went further and argued openly that medicine needed to develop its own formal theory of signs — precisely the discipline palmistry had been practising, in its own idiom, all along.

Source: *Extracted with edits and revisions from: <https://aeon.co/essays/what-palmistry-and-medicine-have-always-had-in-common> (Alison Bashford, Aeon, 8 September 2026).*

QUESTIONS

Q13. Which of the following best captures the central argument of the passage?

- (A) Palmistry has now been scientifically vindicated as a reliable diagnostic method
- (B) Modern genetics finally disproved every folk belief underlying palmistry
- (C) Nineteenth-century anatomists were the first to study the hand scientifically
- (D) The line between fortune-telling and clinical medicine is blurrier than assumed

Q14. What can be inferred about the relationship between the 1959 chromosomal confirmation and centuries of folk palm-reading?

- (A) It proved folk palm-reading had directly guided the genetic research
- (B) It confirmed that all folk beliefs about palms are scientifically valid
- (C) It accidentally validated a mark folk tradition had linked to temperament
- (D) It disproved the earlier nineteenth-century theory of the hand as design

Q15. In the context of the passage, "relocate" (as in "the nineteenth century did not close that gap so much as relocate it") most nearly means:

- (A) move a problem elsewhere without resolving it
- (B) permanently close the long-standing divide between two whole fields
- (C) physically move palmistry practice into hospitals
- (D) erase all differences between anatomy and folklore

Q16. Which single label best names the practice the passage says fortune-tellers and physicians have in common?

- (A) Predicting the future purely by chance
- (B) Inferring a hidden condition from visible evidence
- (C) Testing a hypothesis under controlled conditions
- (D) Memorising anatomical structures by rote

Q17. The passage's account of the nineteenth century suggests that the overlap between mystical and scientific readings of the hand persisted chiefly because:

- (A) belief in benevolent design had already vanished by then
- (B) Darwin's work eliminated all earlier religious readings of the hand
- (C) writers of the period treated the two as one subject
- (D) anatomists of the period limited themselves strictly to laboratory data

Q18. The author's attitude toward the historical overlap between palmistry and medicine is best described as:

- (A) wry and appreciative, not dismissive

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- (B) contemptuous of any physician who ever entertained palmistry
- (C) anxious that modern medicine might revert to superstition
- (D) strictly neutral, offering only a bare chronology

PASSAGE 4 (Q19-Q24)

Topic: *Archaeology — A City Named for Its Own Isolation*

For three years running, a veteran archaeologist working in Mexico's Calakmul Biosphere Reserve had turned up only sites that looters had already stripped bare. This time, an aerial laser survey of the forest canopy — a technique that can trace the ghost of a buried wall or plaza floor through solid tree cover — flagged a cluster of geometric shapes near the base of the Yucatán Peninsula that satellite images alone could never have resolved. Reaching the site meant machete-cutting almost three miles through jungle so dense that the team gave the eventual settlement a name drawn from a local Mayan phrase meaning, roughly, "there is no road."

What they found had escaped both looters and, until now, scholars: an urban core of plazas ringed by palaces, religious buildings and terraces linked by water channels, centred on a pyramid-temple in a distinctive regional style that rose more than forty feet above the forest floor. Scattered around the plazas were more than a dozen carved stone monuments, one of which showed a scene of startling violence — a carved figure decapitating another — dated by its accompanying glyphs to the middle of the ninth century of the common era.

That single date matters far more than the carving's gore. The civilisation that built this city underwent a well-documented, still only partly explained collapse across the very century in which that monument was carved, after several hundred years in which its urban centres had grown steadily larger and more elaborate. Because this particular city was never resettled, looted or built over, its monuments preserve a rare, undisturbed snapshot of what its builders were recording about themselves in the decades immediately before that decline — evidence that a city under construction on the very eve of a civilisational collapse could still find reason to carve monuments at all.

Source: *Extracted with edits and revisions from: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/deep-in-the-mexican-jungle-archaeologists-discovered-a-lost-maya-city-that-may-yield-clues-about-the-civilization-just-before-it-collapsed-180989030/> (Sonja Anderson, Smithsonian Magazine, 26 June 2026).*

QUESTIONS

Q19. How, on the evidence of the passage, did the site's isolation end up working in the archaeologists' favour?

- (A) Its monuments were carved from an unusually weather-resistant local stone
- (B) Satellite imagery had already mapped it before the ground survey
- (C) The dense canopy prevented any of its carvings from fading
- (D) Being hard to reach also kept it from resettlement and looting

Q20. The author's tone in presenting the discovery is best described as:

- (A) skeptical of the survey team's claims about the site
- (B) measured and evidentiary, letting the facts carry the significance
- (C) alarmist about the ongoing threat of looting nearby
- (D) satirical about archaeologists' choice of a name for the site

Q21. Why does the passage treat the monument's carved date as mattering more than the violence it depicts?

- (A) It dates the carving to the expansion's end
- (B) It makes this the oldest securely dated monument in the region
- (C) It shows the civilisation's writing system was still largely undeveloped
- (D) It establishes that decapitation was practised across all Maya cities

Q22. The passage suggests this survey found an untouched city, where three earlier years had not, chiefly because:

- (A) the reserve had only very recently been opened to archaeologists
- (B) the team had switched to searching in a different country entirely
- (C) it could map structures hidden beneath the forest canopy
- (D) looters had already begun reporting sites to the authorities

Q23. In the context of the passage, "resolved" (as in "satellite images alone could never have resolved") most nearly means:

- (A) physically travelled to and inspected on the ground
- (B) detected and distinguished with enough clarity to identify
- (C) restored a damaged structure to its original form
- (D) settled a dispute between rival research teams

Q24. The passage's description of the site as an "undisturbed snapshot" of its builders is best understood to mean that it offers:

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- (A) A complete photographic archive taken at the time of the city's founding
- (B) A single dated image proving exactly when the collapse began
- (C) A precise count of every monument the city ever built
- (D) A rare, unaltered record of the city just before its collapse

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PART 2: CURRENT AFFAIRS & GK
(Q25-Q52)

PASSAGE 1 (Q25-Q29)

Topic: Government Scheme — Renewing a Direct Farm-Support Transfer

The Union Cabinet has approved a five-year extension of a long-running central scheme that transfers a fixed cash amount directly into the bank accounts of eligible landholding farmer families, continuing a structure the scheme has followed without change since it was first launched several years ago. Under the scheme, the annual amount is paid out in three equal instalments across the year, credited directly rather than routed through any intermediary, in keeping with the scheme's original design as a direct benefit transfer rather than an input subsidy or a loan-linked support measure. The extension carries the scheme forward through to 2030–31, and the government's announcement framed the renewal explicitly around the idea that a stable, predictable income floor for smallholders is foundational to the country's broader agricultural and rural development goals, rather than a stopgap or election-cycle measure.

The scheme has, since its inception, been one of the largest direct-transfer programmes of its kind anywhere in the world by number of beneficiary households, and its continuation was announced alongside a reaffirmation that eligibility criteria — based on land-holding records maintained by state revenue departments — would remain unchanged. Officials also noted that the scheme's digital payment architecture, built on the same public digital infrastructure used across several other welfare transfers, has been credited with sharply reducing leakage compared to the subsidy-in-kind schemes it was designed to supplement.

The decision to sanction a full five-year extension in one go, rather than renewing the transfer a year at a time, matters beyond the immediate transfer itself: a multi-year budgetary commitment of this kind lets banks, cooperative credit societies and crop-insurance providers build medium-term rural lending and insurance products around an assured income floor, instead of treating the transfer as a year-to-year contingency that could quietly lapse. Direct cash transfers of this kind also sit within a broader shift in welfare design away from price-support and input-subsidy routes — which can distort what farmers choose to grow and tend to benefit larger, better-resourced holdings disproportionately — toward a flat, per-household transfer that reaches every eligible landholding family on identical terms regardless of crop choice or farm size. For a smallholder household, the value of that certainty lies less in any single instalment's size than in what it removes: a

recurring source of uncertainty that would otherwise complicate decisions about which crops to sow, what inputs to purchase, and when, across several planting seasons at a stretch.

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) | Published: 31 July 2026.

QUESTIONS

Q25. The centrally-run scheme described in the passage — paying a fixed annual amount in three equal instalments directly into the bank accounts of landholding farmer families — is officially named the:

- (A) Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana
- (B) Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana
- (C) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
- (D) Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi

Q26. The scheme described in the passage was first launched in which year?

- (A) 2016
- (B) 2018
- (C) 2019
- (D) 2021

Q27. Which Union Ministry administers the scheme discussed in the passage?

- (A) Ministry of Rural Development
- (B) Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
- (C) Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying
- (D) Ministry of Food & Public Distribution

Q28. Which of the following categories is NOT excluded from benefits under the scheme's eligibility norms?

- (A) Serving officers of Central Government departments
- (B) Registered practising doctors, lawyers and architects
- (C) Retired Group D and Class IV government employees
- (D) Former Ministers and sitting Members of Parliament

Q29. Under the Government of India's own classification of expenditure, the scheme described in the passage is a:

- (A) Central Sector Scheme, funded wholly by the Union
- (B) Centrally Sponsored Scheme, cost-shared with States
- (C) State Plan Scheme with Union technical assistance
- (D) Externally aided scheme routed through a corpus

PASSAGE 2 (Q30-Q33)

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Topic: Sports — *A Season of Broken Barriers*

A mid-year review of the national athletics season found that the country's track-and-field competitors had already broken more than two dozen national records in the first half of the year — an unusually dense run of marks even by the standards of a sport whose records fall steadily as training and competition standards improve. The review attributed the cluster partly to a run of major domestic meets held in close succession and partly to a broader improvement across disciplines that, until recently, had rarely produced Indian marks of international relevance at all.

Three results stood out for the kind of barrier they crossed rather than simply the margin by which they improved on the old mark. In a multi-event discipline that combines ten separate track and field disciplines into a single two-day competition, an Indian competitor crossed a round points threshold for the first time in the discipline's history in the country — a mark that had eluded a run of previous national record-holders across more than a decade. In the men's quarter-mile, an Indian runner dipped under a timing threshold that had never previously been beaten by an Indian athlete in that event, in conditions ratified as legal by the sport's timing and wind rules. And in a women's throwing event, the new national mark was set not by an established record-holder but by a teenaged competitor, marking her out as a medal prospect for major multi-sport events still to come that year.

Administrators and coaches typically read a season's records less for any single result than for the pattern they form: a spread of records across running, throwing and multi-event disciplines, rather than a solitary mark in one favoured event, is usually taken as evidence that broader gains in training methods and competition scheduling are lifting standards across the sport as a whole rather than around one exceptional individual. Round or symbolic thresholds carry outsized significance in this reading precisely because crossing one marks the sport entering company it has not previously kept domestically, even where the underlying margin of improvement over the earlier mark is comparatively small. Compiling a formal mid-season review, rather than tracking results only meet by meet, is itself part of a wider shift toward treating such results as a planning tool for identifying disciplines and emerging athletes worth investing in ahead of major multi-sport events still to come.

Source: *Athletics India (NNIS)* | Published: 13 July 2026.

QUESTIONS

Q30. The multi-event athletics discipline described in the passage — combining ten separate track-and-field events into a single two-day competition — is known as the:

- (A) Heptathlon
- (B) Pentathlon
- (C) Decathlon
- (D) Triathlon

Q31. The Indian athlete generally credited with crossing this discipline's round-points barrier for the first time nationally, referenced in the passage without being named, is:

- (A) Avinash Sable
- (B) Neeraj Chopra
- (C) Gurindervir Singh
- (D) Tejaswin Shankar

Q32. The women's throwing event in which a teenaged competitor set the new national mark described in the passage is the:

- (A) Javelin throw
- (B) Discus throw
- (C) Hammer throw
- (D) Shot put

Q33. The practice of compiling a formal mid-season review, rather than tracking results only meet by meet, is best read by the passage as:

- (A) A disciplinary audit of underperforming athletes
- (B) An input for targeting future resource allocation
- (C) A ranking device for national team selection
- (D) A publicity exercise timed to sponsorship cycles

PASSAGE 3 (Q34-Q38)

Topic: *International Relations — A Defence Visit Decades in the Waiting*

India's Defence Minister travelled this month to a neighbouring island nation with which India shares centuries of religious, cultural and maritime ties across a narrow strait — a visit officials on both sides described as landmark chiefly because of how rare it was: it marked the first time in close to four decades that an Indian Defence Minister had travelled there in that specific capacity, even as ministers from other portfolios had visited more routinely in the interim. The three-day visit was built around consultations with the host country's senior leadership on deepening cooperation in maritime security, joint training and defence industry ties, and the visiting minister led a delegation drawing officials from both the defence and external affairs ministries.

Officials on the Indian side framed the visit against the backdrop of a strategic neighbourhood in which competing external powers have sought greater naval access and port infrastructure in the region, positioning India's outreach as a reaffirmation of a relationship the visiting minister framed in civilisational rather than purely transactional terms, describing the Indian-origin community resident

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there as a "bridge" that continues to nurture the two countries' special relationship. The minister also set aside time to meet members of the sizeable Indian-origin community resident in the host country's capital, a gesture read locally as underscoring the visit's civilisational framing alongside its strategic one.

Visits that break a gap of this length carry weight that outlasts the itinerary itself: in diplomatic practice, the seniority of the visiting office-holder and the frequency of exchanges at that level are commonly read, by both governments and by outside observers, as a proxy for how central a relationship currently sits within each side's foreign-policy priorities, regardless of how much day-to-day cooperation may continue quietly at lower levels in the interim. A defence-specific visit, as distinct from one led by a head of government or a foreign minister, signals that the two countries are treating security and military cooperation as a track worth cultivating in its own right rather than folding it into a broader diplomatic or economic relationship. Neighbourhood diplomacy of this kind also tends to be read regionally rather than purely bilaterally: a gesture toward a smaller neighbour is often studied elsewhere in the region as a signal of how a larger power intends to conduct itself toward other similarly placed neighbours, which is part of why officials on both sides chose to present the visit as the resumption of a long-standing relationship rather than as a routine courtesy call.

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) | Published: 7 September 2026.

QUESTIONS

Q34. The neighbouring island nation described in the passage — separated from India by a narrow strait, with centuries of shared religious, cultural and maritime ties — is:

- (A) Maldives
- (B) Bangladesh
- (C) Myanmar
- (D) Sri Lanka

Q35. The Union Defence Minister who undertook the visit described in the passage is:

- (A) S. Jaishankar
- (B) Amit Shah
- (C) Rajnath Singh
- (D) Nirmala Sitharaman

Q36. The narrow strait separating India from the country described in the passage is the:

- (A) Strait of Malacca
- (B) Ten Degree Channel
- (C) Palk Strait
- (D) Gulf of Mannar

Q37. Based on the passage's own reasoning, a sharp rise in the frequency of senior ministerial exchanges between two countries would most plausibly signal that the two governments are:

- (A) Substituting symbolism for working-level cooperation
- (B) Responding chiefly to pressure from a third power
- (C) Folding defence ties into a wider trade framework
- (D) Elevating each other within their external agendas

Q38. The trilateral maritime-security grouping formed by India with two island neighbours to its south, since widened to take in other Indian Ocean states, is known as the:

- (A) Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
- (B) Colombo Security Conclave
- (C) Indian Ocean Rim Association
- (D) Bay of Bengal Initiative (BIMSTEC)

PASSAGE 4 (Q39-Q43)

Topic: *Economy — Slipping a Rank Without Slowing Down*

A statement placed before Parliament this year confirmed that India had slipped two places in a widely-watched ranking of the world's largest economies, as measured in current US-dollar terms in the flagship half-yearly outlook published by a major international lending institution. Officials attributed the slide to two distinct and largely unrelated causes arriving together: a marked weakening of the rupee against the dollar over the financial year, which mechanically shrinks any economy's dollar-denominated size regardless of how it performs in its own currency; and, separately, a routine revision by India's own national statistical agency of the base year used to compute national income, which produced a lower recalculated starting figure under the new series than the old one would have shown for the same period.

The government was at pains to separate this ranking shift from the underlying performance of the economy itself, pointing out that growth in rupee terms over the same period remained among the fastest recorded by any large economy, and that the size-ranking effect was expected to reverse within a couple of years as the currency and base-year effects washed out of the year-on-year comparison. Economists quoted in the aftermath broadly agreed that a ranking built on a single exchange rate snapshot says little about an economy's real trajectory, even as they acknowledged that such rankings carry outsized symbolic weight in political and public discourse.

Rankings of this kind are watched closely for reasons that have little to do with their technical precision: a change in

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an economy's position in a global size table is easy to headline and easy to weaponise politically, even though comparing economies through a single currency conversion at a single point in time mainly captures exchange-rate movements over that particular year rather than any underlying shift in productive capacity, employment or living standards. A currency-driven change of this sort is, by construction, also temporary in a way a genuine slowdown in output is not: because the ranking is recalculated whenever exchange rates move, an economy can lose a place in one year's snapshot and regain it in the next without anything real having changed in between. Base-year revisions complicate the comparison further, since they are a routine, periodic housekeeping exercise carried out by national statistical agencies to keep an economy's measured output consistent with its current structure — such a revision can lower or raise a recalculated figure for reasons that have nothing to do with how the economy actually performed that year, which is precisely why economists caution against reading any single year's ranking change as a verdict on national economic performance.

Source: *Business Standard* | *Published: 11 August 2026.*

QUESTIONS

Q39. The "major international lending institution" that publishes the flagship half-yearly outlook referenced in the passage is the:

- (A) International Finance Corporation
- (B) World Bank
- (C) Asian Development Bank
- (D) International Monetary Fund

Q40. India's "own national statistical agency," referred to functionally but not by name in the passage, operates under which Union Ministry?

- (A) Ministry of Finance
- (B) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
- (C) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- (D) Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Q41. Which of the following is NOT among the five economies that now rank above India in this size table?

- (A) United States
- (B) China
- (C) Brazil
- (D) Japan

Q42. The base year for computing India's national income, revised as described in the passage, moved from 2011-12 to which year?

- (A) 2017-18
- (B) 2019-20

(C) 2020-21

(D) 2022-23

Q43. If, hypothetically, the rupee strengthened sharply against the dollar next year with no change in India's real output, the passage's own logic suggests India's dollar-GDP rank would most likely:

- (A) Worsen further, regardless of the currency effect
- (B) Stay exactly the same as the previous year
- (C) Become impossible to calculate
- (D) Improve, purely as a currency effect

PASSAGE 5 (Q44-Q48)

Topic: *Static GK — A City Still Giving Up Its Secrets*

A UNESCO World Heritage-listed medieval capital in southern India — once the seat of an empire that, at its height, controlled most of the peninsula south of the Krishna river for over two centuries before its dramatic sixteenth-century fall — has been back in the news this year for what continuing excavation is still turning up beneath it. Archaeologists working near one of the site's best-known temple complexes uncovered what appears to be one of the most sophisticated stone-built water-management channels yet found from the empire's period, apparently serving both practical drainage and the ritual-purification needs of temple worship. In the same excavation season, specialists working inside a Jain temple within the same complex recovered a pair of unusually rare stone sculptures — one depicting a serpent-deity figure, the other a mythical bird-being associated with Vaishnavite iconography — alongside structural traces of an older temple roof buried beneath the site.

The finds add to a long-running excavation programme at the site that has, in recent years, also uncovered fine ornamental stonework and painted plasterwork at other temple structures nearby, reinforcing the site's reputation as one of the country's richest single concentrations of surviving medieval temple architecture. Heritage authorities noted that the site's remoteness and its protected status have helped keep large sections of it comparatively undisturbed even as excavation continues season after season.

Finds of this kind matter to historians less for the individual object than for what a well-preserved water-management system reveals about the underlying urban plan: a capital able to channel water precisely enough to serve both large-scale drainage and the exacting purity requirements of temple ritual required a level of centralised engineering and planning capacity that written chronicles of the period rarely capture in comparable detail. Continuing excavation at a site of this scale also matters because a medieval capital of this size was rarely built, occupied and abandoned in a single uniform phase; each excavation season tends to peel

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back a slightly different layer of the same urban core, so the overall picture of how the city functioned, worshipped and administered itself keeps being revised rather than settling once and for all. That a site of this importance still has undisturbed ground left to excavate, centuries after its political fall, is itself unusual: most capitals of comparable stature were absorbed into later cities and built over repeatedly, which is part of why a site preserved largely as it was left behind at the point of abandonment is so valuable to archaeologists working on pre-colonial urban centres generally, not only this one.

Source: *Deccan Herald* | Published: August 2026.

QUESTIONS

Q44. The medieval capital in southern India described in the passage — once seat of an empire controlling most of the peninsula south of the Krishna river — is:

- (A) Hampi
- (B) Belur
- (C) Halebidu
- (D) Warangal

Q45. This capital belonged to which empire?

- (A) Chola Empire
- (B) Hoysala Empire
- (C) Kakatiya Dynasty
- (D) Vijayanagara Empire

Q46. The empire's dramatic sixteenth-century fall, referenced in the passage, followed which battle?

- (A) Battle of Talikota
- (B) Battle of Panipat
- (C) Battle of Plassey
- (D) Battle of Haldighati

Q47. The group of monuments at this site was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in which year?

- (A) 1983
- (B) 1986
- (C) 1993
- (D) 2004

Q48. Consider the following statements about the empire whose capital the passage describes:

- I. It was founded in the fourteenth century.
- II. Its most celebrated ruler, under whom it reached its zenith, was Krishnadevaraya.
- III. It was ruled throughout its existence by a single dynasty. Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- (A) I and II only
- (B) II only
- (C) I and III only
- (D) I, II and III

PASSAGE 6 (Q49-Q52)

Topic: *Static GK — A Prize Divided in Two*

A major English-language literary prize, awarded each year to a single full-length work of fiction that has been translated into English from any other language, was announced again this year — and, as the prize's rules have required since it split away from its older, English-language-only parent award roughly a decade ago, the winnings were divided equally between the author and the translator, in recognition that a translated novel is, in a real sense, authored twice over. This year's winning novel was written originally in Mandarin Chinese, and takes the unusual form of a fictional rediscovered memoir, framed as though set down in the 1930s by a visiting writer from the colonial power then administering the island where the story unfolds — a device the judges praised for letting the novel work simultaneously as a warm, food-driven romance and as a sharply observed study of colonial power and language politics. It was the first time a work translated from Mandarin had won the prize since the award's creation.

The announcement was made in London, and the winning author and her translator jointly received both the prize money and a specially commissioned trophy. The judges' panel, which rotates in composition from year to year, had shortlisted six titles drawn from five different source languages before settling on the winner, continuing the prize's stated aim of steering English-language readers toward fiction they would otherwise have no route to encountering at all.

Splitting the prize money equally between author and translator is itself a departure from older literary-prize convention, which treated translation as a supporting craft rather than a form of authorship in its own right; recognising the translator as a full co-recipient reflects a broader shift in how the literary world thinks about translated fiction, treating tone, rhythm and idiom as inseparable from the finished work a reader encounters rather than as a neutral conduit for someone else's prose. A prize dedicated exclusively to translated fiction also serves a gatekeeping function a general fiction prize does not: it can only ever honour a work that has already cleared the hurdle of finding a publisher willing to commission an English translation at all, so a win draws attention back toward a publishing pipeline an English-language audience would otherwise have little visibility into. Building a shortlist from several different source languages before narrowing to a winner further underlines that the prize's underlying purpose is to keep widening the range of literary traditions an English-language readership is exposed to.

Source: *The Guardian* | Published: 19 May 2026.

QUESTIONS

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Q49. The major English-language literary prize described in the passage — awarded annually to a single translated work of fiction, with winnings split equally between author and translator — is the:

- (A) Booker Prize
- (B) International Booker Prize
- (C) Nobel Prize in Literature
- (D) Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

Q50. This year's winning novel, presented as a fictional rediscovered memoir from the 1930s, is titled:

- (A) Taiwan Travelogue
- (B) The Vegetarian
- (C) Tomb of Sand
- (D) Kairos

Q51. The first work translated from any Indian language to win this prize, in 2022, was:

- (A) The White Tiger, translated from English
- (B) Tomb of Sand, translated from Hindi
- (C) The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, translated from Urdu
- (D) Interpreter of Maladies, translated from Bengali

Q52. The translator who jointly received this year's prize money and trophy alongside the author is:

- (A) Lin King
- (B) Deborah Smith
- (C) Daisy Rockwell
- (D) Anton Hur

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PART 3: LEGAL REASONING (Q53-Q82)

PASSAGE 1 (Q53-Q56)

Topic: *Jurisprudence (The Rule of Law — From Dicey's Formal Conception to Substantive Protection Against Arbitrariness)*

Among the foundational ideas of constitutional government is the rule of law, most influentially formulated by the nineteenth-century jurist A.V. Dicey as resting on three related propositions: that no person may be punished or made to suffer except for a distinct breach of law established before the ordinary courts, ruling out wide, undefined discretionary power in the hands of government; that every person, whatever their rank or office, is equally subject to the same law administered by the same courts, so that no official stands above the process to which an ordinary citizen is subject; and that the general principles of a constitution are themselves the fruit of judicial decisions determining the rights of private persons in particular cases, so that rights are secured by their enforceability in the ordinary courts rather than by their mere declaration in a document. On this formulation, the rule of law is essentially a formal guarantee: it asks only whether a power was actually conferred by a validly made law, not whether the exercise of that power was itself reasonable, proportionate or fair.

Indian courts have read considerably more into the guarantee than this formal core. In one line of authority, the Supreme Court held that equality and arbitrariness are sworn enemies: where equality is a dynamic concept that resists confinement within traditional or doctrinaire limits, arbitrariness is its very antithesis, so that a State action affected by arbitrariness violates the equal protection of the laws even where the action can be traced to a source of authority that does exist in law. A later decision carried the same insight into personal liberty: a procedure depriving a person of life or personal liberty is not "established by law" merely because a competent legislature enacted it through the correct process; the procedure itself must additionally be right, just and fair, and not fanciful, oppressive or arbitrary, failing which it cannot be regarded as a "procedure" within the meaning of the guarantee at all. Read together, the two decisions convert the rule of law from a purely formal question — was there a law authorising this? — into a substantive one: is the law, and the manner of its exercise, itself free from arbitrariness?

Source: *Adapted from settled constitutional-law doctrine on the rule of law; grounded in *E.P. Royappa v. State of Tamil Nadu*, (1974) 4 SCC 3, and *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, (1978) 1 SCC 248.*

QUESTIONS

Q53. A statute confers on a licensing officer the power to grant or refuse a trade licence "in his discretion," without laying down any criteria for exercising it. The officer refuses a licence to one applicant solely because that applicant had once publicly criticised him, while granting identical licences to every other similarly placed applicant. Applying the passage's principle linking arbitrariness to inequality, is the refusal consistent with the rule of law?

- (A) Yes, because the statute validly confers discretion, and any exercise of a power actually conferred by law is lawful.
- (B) No, because punishing a critic is unfair to free expression, and courts should always protect applicants who criticise officials.
- (C) No, but only if the applicant can prove the officer acted with a specific intention to cause financial loss.
- (D) No, because singling out one applicant from all similarly placed applicants for no assigned reason is arbitrariness itself.

Q54. A duly enacted statute authorises the State to detain a person suspected of a specified offence and prescribes the entire procedure for such detention. That procedure permits detention for an indefinite period without ever informing the detained person of the grounds of detention or giving them any opportunity to make a representation against it. Applying the passage's principle on procedure under Article 21, is this procedure valid merely because it was enacted by a competent legislature through the correct process?

- (A) Yes, because a procedure prescribed by a validly enacted statute automatically satisfies Article 21's requirement of a procedure established by law.
- (B) No, because detention without a fixed release date always causes greater hardship than any procedure a legislature could ever justify.
- (C) No, because a procedure depriving personal liberty must itself be right, just and fair, and this one denies any hearing.
- (D) No, but only if the detained person can show the legislature acted in bad faith when enacting the statute.

Q55. A government official, while off duty, damages a private citizen's property through his own negligence. When sued in the ordinary courts, the official argues that, as a serving government officer, he cannot be made to answer for the claim in the same proceeding as an ordinary private citizen would be. Applying Dicey's principle of equality before the law as described in the passage, is the official's argument correct?

- (A) No, because every person, regardless of office or rank, is subject to the same law administered by the same ordinary courts.

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- (B) Yes, because holding a government officer personally liable would discourage capable people from ever entering public service.
- (C) Yes, but only if the private citizen first obtains the government's own permission before suing any officer.
- (D) No, but only because negligence claims are, as a category, always treated more strictly than any other kind of legal claim.

Q56. Assertion (A): A law that is validly enacted by a competent legislature through the correct legislative procedure, and that expressly authorises a particular executive action, can never be held inconsistent with the rule of law, however arbitrarily the power under it is in fact exercised. Reason (R): Indian courts have held that arbitrariness is the very antithesis of equality, and that a procedure depriving a person of personal liberty must itself be right, just and fair, and not merely the product of a competent legislature's enactment.

- (A) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- (B) A is false, but R is true.
- (C) A is true, but R is false.
- (D) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.

PASSAGE 2 (Q57-Q61)

Topic: *Constitutional Law (Federal Distribution of Powers — the Pith and Substance Doctrine)*

India's Constitution distributes legislative power between Parliament and the State legislatures through three lists in the Seventh Schedule, read with Article 246: the Union List, the State List and the Concurrent List. In practice, almost no law of any complexity confines its effects neatly to a single entry in a single list — a law squarely within a State's power to regulate a local trade may still touch, incidentally, on a subject the Union List reserves to Parliament, such as trade and commerce across State boundaries or import and export. If every such incidental overlap invalidated the law, most legislation on either side would collapse under the slightest cross-border or cross-subject effect.

Courts resolve this through the doctrine of "pith and substance" — examining the true nature and character of the impugned legislation as a whole, rather than any single clause read in isolation, to identify which List's subject matter the law is, in substance, actually about. If the law's pith and substance falls within the enacting legislature's own competence, it remains valid even though it incidentally trenches upon a field assigned to the other legislature, provided that encroachment is genuinely incidental and not a colourable device to legislate on a forbidden subject under the guise of a permitted one. The

doctrine was applied early on to uphold a State prohibition law regulating intoxicating liquor — squarely a State subject — even though the same law incidentally affected the import and export of liquor across the country's customs frontiers, a Union subject, because the law's dominant object remained the regulation of liquor within the State rather than the regulation of cross-border trade. The same reasoning has since been invoked across widely different statutes, including federal anti-terrorism legislation challenged on the ground that its provisions properly belonged to the State List's "public order" entry rather than the Union List entries the Parliament had relied upon; courts have consistently asked not whether a law touches another List at all, but whether its true, dominant character lies within the enacting legislature's own assigned field.

Source: *Adapted from settled constitutional-law doctrine; grounded in *State of Bombay v. F.N. Balsara*, 1951 SCR 682, and *Kartar Singh v. State of Punjab*, (1994) 3 SCC 569.*

QUESTIONS

Q57. A State enacts a law under its public-health legislative power regulating manufacturing standards for a packaged food item produced within the State. The law incidentally affects a modest quantity of the same product that manufacturers also sell to buyers in other States. Traders challenge the law as encroaching upon Parliament's exclusive power over inter-State trade and commerce. Applying the pith and substance doctrine, is the law valid?

- (A) Invalid, because any law that has any effect whatsoever on inter-State trade automatically falls outside the enacting State's legislative competence.
- (B) Invalid, because compliance will raise traders' costs, and courts must shield established trade practices from newly imposed regulatory burdens.
- (C) Valid, only if the Union government first grants written consent to any State law touching inter-State trade in any way.
- (D) Valid, because its dominant object is public-health regulation of intra-State manufacture, and the effect on inter-State trade is genuinely incidental.

Q58. A State legislature enacts a statute titled "Regulation of Local Cooperative Societies," which is within the State List, but whose substantive operative provisions actually regulate deposit-taking and lending activities identical in every material respect to commercial banking functions, a Union List subject. Applying pith and substance, is the statute valid?

- (A) Valid, because the statute's own title expressly describes it as a law regulating cooperative societies, a subject falling within the State List.

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(B) Invalid, because the doctrine looks past the statute's label to its true, dominant character, here banking under a false description.

(C) Invalid, but only because Parliament must give express prior sanction before any State law can touch a Union List entry at all.

(D) Valid, because the law was intended to protect small depositors from exploitation, and protecting vulnerable depositors is a legitimate State concern.

Q59. Parliament enacts a law targeting cross-border terrorist-financing networks, relying on its Union List powers over defence and foreign affairs. Provisions of the law squarely address financing channels with an international dimension, and only incidentally touch upon the maintenance of public order within a State's territory, a State List entry. The law is challenged as one that truly belongs to the public order entry rather than the Union entries invoked. Applying the doctrine, is the law valid?

(A) Valid, because its dominant character addresses cross-border terrorist financing within Union's defence and foreign-affairs competence, despite incidental local effect.

(B) Invalid, because any law addressing violent crime necessarily falls within the State List's public order entry regardless of its character.

(C) Valid, only if no provision of the law also happens to touch upon the maintenance of local public order at all.

(D) Invalid, because targeting extremism inevitably curtails civil liberties, and courts should strike down any law carrying that potential effect.

Q60. Which of the following statements is NOT true, as per the passage, regarding the pith and substance doctrine?

(A) The doctrine requires courts to examine the true nature and character of the legislation as a whole, not any single clause alone.

(B) An incidental encroachment on the other legislature's field does not invalidate a law if genuinely incidental, not a colourable device.

(C) A law with even a minor incidental effect on the other legislature's subject is invalid regardless of its dominant object.

(D) The doctrine has been applied to statutes as different as a State liquor-prohibition law and a federal anti-terrorism law.

Q61. A State enacts a law imposing strict pollution-control standards on factories operating within its territory, a matter within its own competence over local industries and public health. Complying with the new standards raises production costs for small manufacturers, some of whose goods also enter inter-State commerce.

The manufacturers challenge the law as an encroachment on the Union's trade and commerce power. Applying the doctrine, is the law valid?

(A) Invalid, because higher compliance costs may financially strain small manufacturers, and courts should shield vulnerable small businesses from onerous new regulation.

(B) Valid, because its dominant object is environmental and public-health regulation within State competence, and the incidental trade burden doesn't change that.

(C) Invalid, because any State law raising the cost of goods moving in inter-State trade automatically encroaches on the Union's commerce power.

(D) Valid, only if the State first proves in court that not a single manufacturer will face any increase in production cost.

PASSAGE 3 (Q62-Q65)

Topic: *Criminal Law (Organised Crime as a Standalone Offence — BNS Provisions)*

Before 2024, "organised crime" as such had no home in India's general criminal code; it existed only in special and local statutes enacted by individual States to deal with specific criminal syndicates, leaving Parliament's general penal law with no comparable provision of its own. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita changed this by, for the first time, codifying organised crime directly into the general criminal law of the country.

The provision defines organised crime broadly as any continuing unlawful activity — including offences such as kidnapping, robbery, vehicle theft, extortion, land grabbing, contract killing, cyber-crime, and trafficking in persons, drugs, weapons or other contraband — carried out by a person or group of persons, acting singly or jointly as a member of, or on behalf of, an organised crime syndicate, through violence, threat of violence, intimidation or coercion, for a direct or indirect material or financial benefit. A defining structural feature of the offence is that it is not established by a single criminal act, however serious: the provision requires the activity to be "continuing," which its explanatory material ties to a pattern of unlawful activity reflected in more than one chargesheet filed against the offender or the syndicate within a preceding ten-year period before a competent court.

The punishment structure is layered rather than uniform. Where the organised crime results in the death of any person, it attracts death or life imprisonment, together with a substantial minimum fine; where it does not result in death, the punishment is a minimum term running up to life imprisonment, again with a mandatory minimum fine. Separately, and as distinct offences in their own right, the

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provision punishes abetment, attempted commission or conspiracy to commit organised crime; mere membership of an organised crime syndicate; knowingly harbouring or concealing a person who has committed such an offence; and possessing property known to be proceeds of organised crime — each carrying its own graded minimum sentence and minimum fine, distinct from the primary offence itself.

Source: Adapted from the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Section 111*.

QUESTIONS

Q62. Ramesh, acting entirely alone, commits a single act of extortion against a shopkeeper. It is the first offence of his life, he has no affiliation with any group, and no chargesheet has ever previously been filed against him for any offence. He is charged with organised crime under the passage's provision. Applying the passage's definition, is the charge of organised crime sustainable against Ramesh?

- (A) Yes, because extortion is expressly listed among the offences capable of constituting organised crime under the provision's own definition.
- (B) No, because Ramesh is a first-time offender who deserves leniency rather than being branded and punished as an organised criminal.
- (C) Yes, because a single act of extortion causing significant financial loss automatically satisfies the provision's continuing-activity requirement on its own.
- (D) No, because the provision requires continuing activity in more than one chargesheet within ten years, unlike a lone offence.

Q63. A group of individuals faced three separate chargesheets over the preceding six years for offences including vehicle theft, land grabbing and contract killing, each carried out jointly for the group's financial benefit through intimidation of victims. The same group is now chargesheeted afresh for another instance of land grabbing carried out through threats against the landowner. Applying the passage's definition, can this fresh instance be properly charged as organised crime?

- (A) No, because the earlier chargesheets involved different categories of offence, and organised crime requires every chargesheet to allege an identical offence.
- (B) No, because only a chargesheet that results in a conviction can be counted toward the ten-year continuing-activity requirement under the provision.
- (C) Yes, because multiple chargesheets within ten years, listed offences carried out jointly through intimidation for gain, match the provision's own definition.

(D) Yes, but only because the landowner in this fresh instance suffered severe financial hardship from losing the land to the group.

Q64. Priya knows that her cousin has been convicted of organised crime and is currently evading arrest. She lets him stay hidden in her house for several weeks without informing the police, but she herself had no role in any predicate criminal activity of the syndicate. Applying the passage's framework, what is Priya's potential liability?

- (A) She may be separately liable for knowingly harbouring a person who committed organised crime, an offence carrying its own graded sentence.
- (B) She cannot be liable at all, because only persons who personally commit the underlying predicate offence can be punished under this provision.
- (C) She is liable for the primary offence and faces the same punishment as her cousin, since sheltering makes her a full participant.
- (D) She should not be liable, because family loyalty and concern for a relative's welfare are complete defences to harbouring an offender.

Q65. A syndicate member takes part in an extortion racket in which a shop owner, resisting a coercive collection attempt, is killed during the confrontation. The member argues that because he personally never intended anyone's death and meant only to extort money, he should face the passage's non-death tier of punishment rather than the death-resulting tier. Applying the passage's punishment structure, is his argument correct?

- (A) Yes, because he genuinely intended only to extort money, and punishment should never exceed a person's own actual intent.
- (B) Yes, because the passage requires proof of a separate, specific intention to kill before the death-resulting tier of punishment can ever apply.
- (C) No, but the death-resulting tier applies only where the killing was intentional rather than occurring during the victim's own resistance.
- (D) No, because the passage ties the higher tier to whether the crime results in death, not to any member's intent to kill.

PASSAGE 4 (Q66-Q70)

Topic: Contract Law (Indemnity and Guarantee — Sections 124–147, Indian Contract Act 1872)

A contract of indemnity, under the Act, is one by which one party promises to save the other from loss caused to that other by the conduct of the promisor himself or by the conduct of any other person. The indemnity-holder need not first suffer the loss out of pocket before enforcing the promise; once the holder's liability has become absolute, or

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the loss has otherwise become certain, the indemnity may be enforced even in advance of actual payment.

A contract of guarantee is a distinct, though related, structure: a contract to perform the promise, or discharge the liability, of a third person in case that person defaults. The person who gives the guarantee is called the surety; the person in respect of whose default the guarantee is given is the principal debtor; and the person to whom the guarantee is given is the creditor. A guarantee may be oral or in writing, and there is, in every such contract, an implied promise by the principal debtor to indemnify the surety for whatever the surety rightfully pays under the guarantee — though not for any sum paid wrongfully or without authority.

The surety's own liability is, unless the contract otherwise provides, co-extensive with that of the principal debtor — meaning the creditor may in general recover from the surety exactly what could have been recovered from the principal debtor, no more and no less. That liability is not, however, unconditional. If the creditor and the principal debtor vary the terms of their underlying contract without the surety's consent, the surety stands discharged in respect of transactions occurring after that variance, regardless of whether the variation actually caused the surety any prejudice. Separately, if the creditor does any act inconsistent with the surety's rights, or omits to do any act which its duty to the surety requires it to do, and the surety's eventual remedy against the principal debtor is thereby impaired, the surety is discharged. And where the creditor holds a security given by the principal debtor, the surety is entitled to the benefit of that security; if the creditor loses it, or parts with it without the surety's consent, the surety is discharged to the extent of the value of the security so lost or released. Where two or more persons stand as co-sureties for the same debt, they are, in the absence of a contract to the contrary, liable to contribute equally toward satisfying it, each bearing a share proportionate to what the others are also bound to bear.

Source: *Adapted from the Indian Contract Act, 1872, Sections 124, 126, 128, 133, 139, 141, 145 and 146, together with the settled equitable rule permitting an indemnity to be enforced once the holder's liability has become absolute (*Gajanan Moreshwar Parelkar v. Moreshwar Madan Mantri*, AIR 1942 Bom 302).*

QUESTIONS

Q66. A company, as indemnity-holder under a contract of indemnity, is sued by a third party, and a court decree is passed making the company's liability to that third party absolute. The company has not yet actually paid any amount under the decree. Applying the passage's principle, can the company enforce the indemnity against the indemnifier before making any payment?

- (A) No, because indemnity may only be enforced strictly after the indemnity-holder has actually paid the third party out of his own funds.
- (B) Yes, because once the indemnity-holder's liability has become absolute, the promise may be enforced even in advance of actual payment.
- (C) No, because requiring the indemnifier to pay before any money changes hands would be commercially unfair to the indemnifier's own interests.
- (D) Yes, but only if the original contract of indemnity has been reduced to a formal, written and registered instrument beforehand.

Q67. A creditor obtains a decree against the principal debtor for a fixed sum, but the principal debtor has since become untraceable and no execution has been attempted against him. The creditor instead sues the surety directly for the same amount. The surety argues that the creditor must first exhaust every remedy against the principal debtor before proceeding against him. Applying the passage's principle, is the surety's argument correct?

- (A) Yes, because a creditor may sue a surety only after first obtaining a decree of execution unsatisfied against the principal debtor's assets.
- (B) No, because pursuing the untraceable principal debtor further before troubling the surety would plainly be the fairer course for any diligent creditor.
- (C) No, because the surety's liability is co-extensive with the principal debtor's, entitling the creditor to recover directly without exhausting other remedies.
- (D) Yes, because a surety's liability is only secondary and springs into existence solely upon actual failure of execution against the principal debtor.

Q68. Without the surety's knowledge or consent, a creditor and the principal debtor privately agree to extend the loan's repayment period and substantially raise the interest rate. The surety later claims to have been discharged by this variance. The creditor responds that the variance actually benefited the surety by giving the principal debtor more time and caused the surety no prejudice at all. Applying the passage's principle, is the surety discharged?

- (A) Yes, because the passage discharges a surety from transactions after such a variance regardless of whether it actually caused any prejudice.
- (B) No, because the surety must first prove that the specific variance caused an actual, measurable financial loss before discharge is possible.
- (C) No, because the surety should not escape a valid obligation merely on a technicality that caused no real harm to anyone involved.

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(D) Yes, but the discharge applies retrospectively to the entire guaranteed debt from the very inception of the original guarantee itself.

Q69. A creditor holds valuable security deposited by the principal debtor as collateral for a guaranteed debt. Without the surety's knowledge, the creditor negligently releases that security back to the principal debtor, eliminating the surety's ability to later recover from it if the surety ends up paying the guaranteed debt himself. Applying the passage's principle, is the surety discharged?

- (A) No, because only a formal variance of the contract's own terms, not release of collateral security, can ever discharge a surety.
- (B) No, because the creditor acted without any dishonest motive, and honest conduct can never impair a surety's own legal rights.
- (C) Yes, and the surety is discharged entirely and permanently from every liability under the guarantee, regardless of the released security's value.
- (D) Yes, to the extent of the value of the security, since the surety was entitled to the benefit of it.

Q70. Assertion (A): X and Y are co-sureties for the same debt, with no agreement between them displacing the ordinary rule of contribution. After the principal debtor defaults, the creditor recovers the entire guaranteed sum from X alone. X may compel Y to contribute a proportionate, equal share of the amount X has paid. Reason (R): In the absence of a contract to the contrary, co-sureties for the same debt are liable to contribute equally, each bearing a share proportionate to what the others are also bound to bear.

- (A) A is false, but R is true.
- (B) A is true, but R is false.
- (C) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- (D) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.

PASSAGE 5 (Q71-Q74)

Topic: Law of Torts (Consent as a Defence — *Volenti Non Fit Injuria*)

Among the general defences available to a defendant in an action for tort is the maxim *volenti non fit injuria* — no injury is done to one who consents. Where a claimant has voluntarily and with full knowledge of the nature and extent of a risk agreed to run that risk, the claimant cannot later be heard to complain of harm that materialises from precisely that risk. The defence rests on the idea that a person who freely accepts a danger cannot shift onto another the consequences of a risk they themselves chose to bear; it is not enough that the claimant merely knew a risk existed in the abstract — the consent must extend to

the specific risk that in fact caused the harm, and it must be genuinely free, not induced by fraud, compulsion, or a relationship of unequal bargaining power that leaves no real choice.

The defence was applied in a case where a driver had taken a jeep to a petrol station, and two strangers, without being invited to do so, climbed onto the vehicle to take a lift. During the short journey a defect in one of the wheels caused the jeep to overturn; the two men were thrown clear and suffered injuries, one of them fatally. The court held that neither the driver nor his employer could be made liable: the mishap was found to be a pure accident rather than the product of any rash or negligent driving, and, in any event, the two men had voluntarily and without invitation placed themselves at whatever risk a free, uninvited lift on a moving vehicle carried, so that the maxim *volenti non fit injuria* applied to bar their claim.

The defence has firm limits that keep it from swallowing the law of negligence altogether. It does not extend to a risk different in kind from the one actually consented to — consenting to travel as a passenger is not consent to the driver's own subsequent negligent driving unless that risk, too, was accepted knowingly. Nor does it apply where a statute imposes a duty that cannot be contracted out of, or to a rescuer who acts to save another from a danger the defendant has himself created, since the law is reluctant to treat an instinctive or altruistic response to danger as a free, voluntary assumption of risk in the same sense the maxim contemplates.

Source: Adapted from settled tort-law doctrine; grounded in **Padmavati v. Dugganaika**, (1975) 1 Kant LJ 93.

QUESTIONS

Q71. A truck driver stops briefly at a fuel station. Without being invited, a bystander climbs onto the truck's open cargo area to get a free ride. During the short journey, one tyre bursts due to a latent manufacturing defect that neither the driver nor anyone else could reasonably have detected, causing the truck to swerve and throw the bystander off, injuring him. He sues the driver and the truck's owner for negligence. Applying *volenti non fit injuria*, are the driver and owner liable?

- (A) Yes, because the bystander suffered genuine physical injury, and an injured person deserves compensation regardless of how the ride came about.
- (B) No, because the bystander voluntarily and without invitation accepted the risk of an uninvited ride, and the mishap was a pure accident.
- (C) No, but only if the bystander had first signed a written waiver of liability before climbing onto the moving truck.

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(D) Yes, because a vehicle's operator owes an absolute, non-negotiable duty of care to every person riding on that vehicle, invited or not.

Q72. A passenger agrees to travel in a friend's car, aware in a general way that road travel carries some ordinary risk of accident. During the journey, the friend, while showing off to impress the passenger, deliberately drives through a red light at reckless speed, causing a collision that injures the passenger. The passenger sues for negligence, and the driver raises *volenti*, arguing the passenger accepted the risk merely by agreeing to ride in the car. Does *volenti* succeed?

(A) No, because consenting to travel as a passenger is not consent to the driver's own reckless driving unless that risk was accepted.

(B) Yes, because anyone who travels by road automatically accepts every risk that might arise during the journey, however caused.

(C) No, only because reckless driving is a serious moral failing that courts should always penalise regardless of any consent that was given.

(D) Yes, but only if the passenger did not audibly protest at the exact moment the driver ran the red light.

Q73. A factory worker signs a form acknowledging that a safety guard required by industrial safety law has been removed from a machine, and agrees in writing to continue operating it anyway. He is later injured by the unguarded machine and sues the factory. The factory raises *volenti*, arguing the worker consented in writing while knowing the specific risk involved. Does *volenti* succeed?

(A) Yes, because the worker's written acknowledgment of the specific risk satisfies every requirement the defence of *volenti* demands.

(B) No, only because factory owners are always presumed to be more powerful and more blameworthy than any worker they employ.

(C) Yes, because the worker's continued employment after learning of the missing guard shows he impliedly waived any statutory protection available.

(D) No, because *volenti* does not apply where a statute imposes a duty that cannot be contracted out of, as here.

Q74. A driver's own negligence causes his car to catch fire while he is trapped inside. A passerby, acting instinctively, rushes in to pull him free and suffers burns while doing so. The negligent driver argues that the passerby voluntarily assumed the risk of entering a burning vehicle. Applying *volenti*, can the passerby recover damages from the negligent driver?

(A) No, because the passerby made a fully informed, deliberate choice to approach a visibly burning vehicle, satisfying every element the defence requires.

(B) Yes, because the rescuer exception treats an instinctive intervention to save another from a danger the defendant created as no voluntary risk.

(C) No, but only if the passerby had no realistic way to escape safely once he had already decided to intervene.

(D) No, because the driver's own negligence in causing the fire is irrelevant once a third party voluntarily chooses to enter danger.

PASSAGE 6 (Q75-Q78)

Topic: Family Law (*Instant Triple Talaq – Constitutional Invalidity and its Legislative Aftermath*)

For decades, a form of divorce recognised under one school of Muslim personal law allowed a husband to dissolve his marriage instantly and irrevocably by pronouncing the word "talaq" three times in a single sitting, without any requirement of a waiting period, an attempt at reconciliation, or even the wife's presence or knowledge at the time. A constitutional challenge to this practice reached the Supreme Court, which, by a narrow majority, held the practice unconstitutional. The majority reasoned that a mode of divorce entirely dependent on a husband's unilateral, unreviewable whim was manifestly arbitrary and therefore fell foul of the guarantee of equality before the law, and further held that the practice was not an essential religious practice integral to the faith, so that it could claim no protection as a facet of the freedom of religion either.

Parliament responded by enacting a dedicated statute. Its central provision declares that any pronouncement of talaq by a Muslim husband upon his wife — whether by spoken or written words, in electronic form, or in any other manner whatsoever — is void and illegal. A husband who nonetheless pronounces such a talaq is made liable to imprisonment for a term extending up to three years, along with a fine. The wife against whom such a void talaq is pronounced is entitled to claim, from her husband, a subsistence allowance for herself and for any dependent children, in an amount to be determined by a Magistrate. On matters of procedure, the offence is made cognizable only where the information is given by the wife herself or by specified close relatives of hers by blood or marriage, and it is made compoundable — that is, capable of being settled and withdrawn — at the wife's own instance, with the Magistrate's permission. Bail may be granted to the accused husband only after the Magistrate has heard the wife and is satisfied that reasonable grounds exist for

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granting it, a departure from the ordinary bail procedure that gives the wife a direct voice in that decision.

Source: *Adapted from the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, Sections 3, 4, 5 and 7; grounded in *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, (2017) 9 SCC 1.*

QUESTIONS

Q75. In a fit of anger, a husband sends his wife a WhatsApp message pronouncing "talaq" three times within that single message. Applying the passage's provisions, is this pronouncement legally effective to dissolve the marriage, and does the husband face any consequence for sending it?

- (A) The pronouncement is void only because it was a text message; the same words spoken aloud would have validly ended the marriage.
- (B) The pronouncement is valid because the husband was angry, and holding him criminally responsible for words said in temper would be unfair.
- (C) The pronouncement, made electronically, is void and illegal, does not dissolve the marriage, and the husband also faces imprisonment and a fine.
- (D) The pronouncement validly dissolves the marriage, since the Act only criminalises the husband's conduct without affecting the talaq's own legal effect.

Q76. After receiving a void talaq pronouncement, a wife mentions it only to a neighbour who is unrelated to her by blood or marriage. The neighbour, without the wife's own information being given to police, lodges a complaint on her behalf. Applying the passage's provisions, can the police register this as a cognizable offence solely on the neighbour's information?

- (A) No, because the offence is cognizable only on information from the wife herself or her specified relatives by blood or marriage.
- (B) Yes, because any member of the public aware of a void talaq pronouncement may validly set the criminal process in motion.
- (C) Yes, because the neighbour acted out of genuine concern for the wife's welfare, and good intentions should suffice to trigger police action.
- (D) No, but only because the offence additionally requires the wife to personally appear at the police station to confirm the neighbour's complaint.

Q77. After the husband is prosecuted, the wife wishes to reconcile and applies to the Magistrate for permission to withdraw her complaint. Separately, the husband applies for bail in the same proceeding. Applying the passage's provisions, what must the Magistrate consider for each application?

- (A) The offence cannot be compounded under any circumstance, and the husband is entitled to bail as of right without any special procedure.
- (B) Compounding may be allowed at the wife's instance, and bail is granted only after the Magistrate hears her and finds reasonable grounds.
- (C) The wife alone may compound the offence without the Magistrate's permission, while bail follows the ordinary procedure applicable to any other offence.
- (D) The Magistrate should deny compounding altogether, since permitting withdrawal would send a harmful social message condoning instant divorce.

Q78. A wife who received a void talaq pronouncement has two minor children from the marriage and seeks a subsistence allowance not only for herself but for the children as well. Applying the passage's provisions, is she entitled to claim an allowance for the children too?

- (A) No, because the Act only entitles the wife to claim allowance for herself, with support for children sought under separate law.
- (B) Yes, but only if the husband has already been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment before any allowance can be claimed.
- (C) No, because awarding subsistence allowance for the children as well would unfairly punish the husband twice over for one act.
- (D) Yes, because the passage entitles the wife to claim subsistence allowance for herself and any dependent children, fixed by a Magistrate.

PASSAGE 7 (Q79-Q82)

Topic: *Company Law (Separate Legal Personality and Lifting the Corporate Veil)*

A company, once incorporated, is treated in law as a legal person distinct from the shareholders who own it and the directors who run it — a foundational principle that lets a company own property, sue and be sued, and incur debts in its own name, while its members generally remain insulated from personal liability for the company's obligations beyond the value of their own shareholding. This separation between a company and the individuals behind it is not, however, treated as absolute in every circumstance. Courts and legislatures have long recognised that the corporate form can, in certain situations, be used as a device to achieve an end the law does not permit to be achieved directly — to defeat a statute, to evade a tax or other legal obligation, to perpetrate a fraud, or to disguise what is, in economic reality, a single enterprise as if it were several unconnected ones. In such situations, courts will "lift" or "pierce" the corporate veil and look directly at the individuals or entities standing behind the corporate form.

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One line of authority identifies the relevant considerations for deciding whether to lift the veil as including whether a statute itself expressly permits it, the object the statute in question is trying to achieve, the public interest involved, and the effect that lifting or not lifting the veil would have on the parties before the court — treating the question as one to be answered on the facts of each case rather than by a fixed formula. A related line of authority went further still in a dispute over whether a power-generating company, wholly owned by and supplying electricity exclusively to a single industrial group, could be treated as one concern with that group for the purposes of a tax exemption: the court held that the contours of the doctrine of lifting the corporate veil are not fixed by any closed list of categories and depend entirely on the facts of the specific case, and on the facts before it, held the two companies were, in substance, one and the same enterprise.

Source: *Adapted from settled company-law doctrine; grounded in *Life Insurance Corporation of India v. Escorts Ltd.* (1986) 1 SCC 264, and *State of U.P. v. Renuagar Power Co.* (1988) 4 SCC 59.*

QUESTIONS

Q79. A businessman incorporates a new company and transfers all the assets of his existing company into it just before that existing company's creditors obtain a judgment against it, leaving the original company an empty shell unable to pay its debts. The creditors seek to recover from the new company instead. Applying the doctrine, may a court lift the corporate veil here?

- (A) Yes, because the corporate form is used to evade existing creditor obligations by shifting assets into a new shell.
- (B) No, because courts can never treat two separately incorporated companies as one enterprise, however closely connected their ownership may be.
- (C) No, because lifting the veil here would discourage entrepreneurs from ever forming new companies for genuine further business ventures.
- (D) Yes, but only if a specific statute expressly and by name authorises piercing the veil in exactly this factual situation.

Q80. A group of companies is organised with several subsidiaries, each separately incorporated, keeping its own accounts, dealing with different customers, and pursuing independent commercial activities. There is no allegation of fraud, statutory evasion, or a disguised single enterprise. A subsidiary's creditor seeks to make the parent company liable for the subsidiary's debts purely because they share a common parent. Applying the doctrine, should the veil be lifted?

- (A) Yes, because the veil must always be lifted whenever companies share a common parent, since group structures inherently avoid liability.
- (B) Yes, because the creditor is a sympathetic small party who will otherwise be left with an inadequate remedy against the subsidiary alone.
- (C) No, because separate legal personality remains the norm absent evidence the form was used to evade an obligation or disguise one enterprise.
- (D) No, because the veil can be lifted only if the parent's shareholding in the subsidiary exceeds a fixed statutory percentage threshold.

Q81. A power-generating company is wholly owned by an industrial group and supplies electricity exclusively to that group's factories, with no independent customers or independent commercial existence of its own. For the purpose of a regulatory exemption available only to a "single industrial concern," may the two be treated as one enterprise?

- (A) No, because separate legal personality is absolute for regulatory purposes and can never be disregarded, however integrated two companies' operations are.
- (B) Yes, but only if the power company is first wound up and its assets formally merged into the group's balance sheet.
- (C) No, because treating them as one enterprise would deny the power company's own employees the dignity of working for an independent organisation.
- (D) Yes, because the doctrine's contours are fact-dependent, not fixed by a closed list, and the two are, in substance, one enterprise.

Q82. A tax authority argues that a court should never examine a statute's object, the public interest involved, or the effect on the parties before deciding whether to lift the corporate veil, insisting that veil-lifting must always follow a single, universally fixed test regardless of context. Applying the passage's approach, is this argument correct?

- (A) Yes, because company law recognises exactly one universal test for lifting the corporate veil that applies identically in every case.
- (B) No, because the passage treats statutory object, public interest, and effect on the parties as relevant, decided on each case's own facts.
- (C) No, but only because tax authorities should always be given the benefit of the doubt when arguing to extend a company's liability.
- (D) Yes, because a statute's object and the public interest matter only when Parliament has expressly named veil-lifting as a remedy.

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PART 4: LOGICAL REASONING (Q83-Q108)

CR PASSAGE 1 (Q83-Q88)

Topic: Critical Reasoning — Public Policy (Circular Economy / E-Waste)

India's rules on electronic waste have, for nearly a decade, required manufacturers of phones, laptops and household appliances to take responsibility for what happens to their products once discarded, chiefly by meeting an annual collection-and-recycling target expressed as a share of the volume they sell. In practice, most manufacturers meet this target on paper by purchasing "extended producer responsibility certificates" from registered recyclers — a tradable proof of compliance that need not correspond to any device the manufacturer itself ever sold or collected. Government audits over the past three years have found that a large majority of the e-waste actually generated nationally still flows into an unregistered, informal recycling sector, where workers extract metals from circuit boards by open burning and acid leaching with no capture of the toxic fumes and effluent this releases, even as the formal certificate-trading system reports collection figures that, added together, exceed the volume of e-waste the country is estimated to generate each year.

Advocates of reform argue that this divergence shows the certificate-trading mechanism has failed at its actual purpose: because a manufacturer can satisfy its legal obligation entirely by purchasing paper certificates rather than by building or funding any physical collection channel of its own, the system rewards compliance on a ledger while leaving the underlying waste stream essentially untouched. They propose replacing certificate trading with a mandate that ties each manufacturer's compliance directly to its own verified collection volume — audited electronic waste physically traceable to a formal, safety-regulated recycler — with financial penalties scaled to any shortfall. Because the mandate would make a manufacturer's own collected tonnage, rather than a purchasable certificate, the basis of compliance, proponents conclude that manufacturers would gain a direct incentive to build the collection infrastructure the current system lets them bypass entirely, redirecting e-waste away from the informal sector and into recyclers whose processes are actually regulated.

Critics caution that manufacturers, lacking existing collection networks, may find it cheaper in the short term simply to pay the penalty than to build new infrastructure, and that a workforce currently earning a living, however hazardingly, in the informal sector could lose that income once formal recyclers begin competing for the same scrap, with no transition support built into the reform.

Source: Adapted from a review of circular-economy policy commentary | Published: August 2026

QUESTIONS

Q83. The reform proponents' central argument is that:

- (A) Certificate trading has raised the cost of compliance for smaller manufacturers.
- (B) The certificate-trading system has been used by only a handful of manufacturers.
- (C) Informal recyclers should be registered and brought under the certificate-trading system.
- (D) Tying compliance to verified collection volume would redirect e-waste to regulated recyclers.

Q84. The proponents' argument assumes which of the following?

- (A) Manufacturers already possess the collection infrastructure the mandate would require.
- (B) A manufacturer's e-waste volume can be reliably verified and traced.
- (C) Informal-sector workers would move into comparable jobs with formal recyclers.
- (D) Penalty revenue collected from shortfalls would fund new collection infrastructure.

Q85. Which finding, if true, would most weaken the proponents' argument?

- (A) Several manufacturers have publicly welcomed the proposed new collection-volume mandate itself.
- (B) National e-waste generation is projected to keep rising over the next decade.
- (C) A pilot found verified collection volumes manipulated as easily as paper certificates.
- (D) Media coverage of electronic-waste disposal has increased over the past three years.

Q86. Which finding, if true, would most strengthen the proponents' argument?

- (A) The existing certificate-trading system generates significant revenue for the government.
- (B) Manufacturers have historically resisted new environmental regulations of many kinds.
- (C) Public-awareness campaigns about electronic-waste disposal have grown somewhat more common.
- (D) A comparable country's audited-collection mandate coincided with rising formal recycling.

Q87. The mention that reported certificate figures "exceed the volume of e-waste the country is estimated to generate" chiefly serves to:

- (A) Prove that every manufacturer has committed a specific, prosecutable offence.
- (B) Show that certificate figures cannot reflect real physical collection.

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- (C) Argue that the country generates less electronic waste than official estimates suggest.
- (D) Show that formal recyclers hold more processing capacity than they currently need.

Q88. Which of the following best identifies a tension between the critics' two objections, as described in the passage?

- (A) One objection assumes failure; the other assumes success with worker displacement.
- (B) The second objection concerns informal workers' income while the first concerns manufacturers' costs.
- (C) Neither objection actually engages with the reform's own proposed financial penalty clause.
- (D) Both objections concede that certificate trading would work better than the proposed mandate.

CR PASSAGE 2 (Q89-Q94)

Topic: Critical Reasoning — Criminal-Justice Policy (Sentencing Reform)

A recurring complaint in criminal-justice circles concerns the wide disparity with which courts sentence offenders convicted a second or subsequent time of driving under the influence of alcohol. A review of sentencing records across several jurisdictions found that, among offenders with an identical prior conviction and a similar blood-alcohol reading at arrest, sentences for the same offence ranged from a suspended sentence with mandatory counselling to several months of actual custody, with the variation traced overwhelmingly to which judge happened to hear the case, rather than to any difference in the facts. Proponents of reform argue that this disparity is a policy failure independent of how severe any individual sentence is: two offenders committing what is, on the facts, essentially the same second offence should not receive materially different punishments purely as a function of judicial assignment.

The proposed remedy is a legislated minimum custodial term for a second or subsequent drunk-driving conviction, removing a judge's discretion to suspend or substitute a non-custodial sentence for that specific, repeat offence. Proponents draw on classical deterrence theory, which holds that the certainty of punishment, not merely its average or typical level, shapes an offender's calculation of whether to reoffend: if a repeat offender knows in advance that a specific custodial term is guaranteed rather than merely possible, proponents argue, eliminating sentencing uncertainty should itself lower the rate of repeat offending, quite apart from any disparity the reform also happens to remove.

Critics raise two distinct objections. The first questions whether an offender who chooses to drive after drinking is, at that moment, engaged in the kind of forward-looking

calculation the deterrence argument requires at all, given that acute alcohol intoxication is independently associated with impaired judgment and reduced impulse control — the very state the offence itself is defined by. The second objection is structural rather than psychological: removing a judge's sentencing discretion does not eliminate discretion from the system, since prosecutors retain the power to charge a repeat offender with a lesser, non-qualifying offence through plea negotiation, so the disparity the reform targets may simply relocate from the sentencing bench to the prosecutor's charging decision, rather than disappear.

Source: Adapted from a review of criminal-justice sentencing-policy commentary | Published: July 2026

QUESTIONS

Q89. The proponents' deterrence-based argument assumes which of the following?

- (A) A guaranteed custodial term deters more effectively because it is severe.
- (B) Sentencing records from the reviewed jurisdictions cover a representative sample.
- (C) A repeat offender factors guaranteed future punishment into the decision.
- (D) Judicial disparity contributes more to reoffending than intoxication itself does.

Q90. Which finding would most directly weaken the proponents' argument?

- (A) Some repeat offenders also carry prior convictions for unrelated offences.
- (B) Offenders arrested for drunk driving typically show impaired forward-looking judgment.
- (C) Sentencing disparity has also been documented in other offence categories.
- (D) Public support for stricter drunk-driving laws has grown in recent years.

Q91. Which finding would most directly strengthen the proponents' argument?

- (A) Mandatory minimum sentences have reduced prison overcrowding in several unrelated categories.
- (B) The public broadly favours mandatory minimum sentences for many types of crime.
- (C) Jurisdictions adopting the reform saw repeat offences fall relative to comparable jurisdictions.
- (D) Judges in the reviewed jurisdictions reported disagreeing with the proposed reform.

Q92. For certainty of punishment to reduce repeat offending in the way proponents describe, which is a necessary condition?

- (A) Offenders must be aware a fixed minimum sentence follows repeat conviction.

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- (B) Repeat offenders must know about the sentencing disparity the reform aims to remove.
- (C) Judges must retain some discretion to vary the term for aggravating factors.
- (D) Sentencing disparity must fall before the certainty effect can begin operating.

Q93. The critics' second objection, about prosecutorial charge-bargaining, chiefly serves to show that:

- (A) Prosecutors alone are responsible for all the sentencing disparity described earlier.
- (B) The mandatory minimum would increase judges' discretion at some later stage.
- (C) No legislature has ever considered restricting plea-bargaining alongside a mandatory minimum.
- (D) Removing sentencing discretion does not remove disparity if it persists earlier.

Q94. Which argument is most similar in reasoning to the critics' second objection?

- (A) A hospital raises junior doctors' salaries and later reports improved staff retention.
- (B) A hospital's rule requiring senior-doctor approval is bypassed by relabelling risky procedures.
- (C) A hospital replaces paper records with an electronic system to cut errors.
- (D) A hospital's recorded error rate falls after it hires additional nursing staff.

CR PASSAGE 3 (Q95-Q100)

Topic: Critical Reasoning — Industrial & Trade Policy
(Public Procurement)

Governments seeking to expand domestic manufacturing capacity in strategic sectors face a familiar sequencing problem: a domestic industry cannot become globally cost-competitive without sustained demand at meaningful scale, but that demand rarely materialises on its own while imported equipment remains cheaper, because early-stage domestic manufacturers have not yet reached the production volumes needed to bring their own costs down to competitive levels. One proposed solution, increasingly used in the renewable-energy sector, is a domestic-content requirement attached to public procurement: government-owned power utilities awarding tenders for solar panels, wind turbines or battery-storage systems would be required to source a minimum share of the contract's value from domestic manufacturers, regardless of whether an imported alternative is available more cheaply.

Proponents argue that public procurement is uniquely suited to solving this sequencing problem because it does not depend on private purchasers voluntarily paying a premium for domestically made equipment: a government utility's tender volume, if reserved in this way, can supply the guaranteed multi-year demand a domestic

manufacturer needs to invest in larger production lines, and larger production lines are what eventually bring per-unit costs down to global levels. On this reasoning, the requirement is explicitly conceived as temporary scaffolding rather than permanent tariff-like protection: once domestic manufacturers reach competitive scale, proponents argue, the same reasoning that justified imposing the requirement — that competitiveness depends on scale the market alone would not otherwise supply — implies that the requirement can be relaxed or removed without renewable-energy deployment slowing down, because domestic equipment would by then compete on its own merits.

Sceptics raise two separate concerns. The near-term one is straightforward: while domestic manufacturers remain below competitive scale, utilities forced to source from them will likely pay more, or accept lower-quality equipment, than an open tender would have delivered, at a moment when the pace of renewable deployment is itself under pressure to accelerate. The second concern is about retaliation rather than cost: several of India's trading partners maintain their own strategic-sector procurement, and a domestic-content mandate applied to their equipment exporters could invite reciprocal restrictions on India's own manufacturers when they bid for procurement contracts abroad — a risk the scale argument, framed purely in terms of domestic cost curves, does not address at all.

Source: Adapted from a review of industrial and trade-policy commentary | Published: August 2026

QUESTIONS

Q95. The passage's central argument in favour of the requirement is that:

- (A) Domestic manufacturers already produce this exact equipment more cheaply than any import.
- (B) Guaranteed procurement demand can supply the scale manufacturers need to become competitive.
- (C) Government utilities should exclude every foreign manufacturer from all future equipment tenders.
- (D) Private consumers will voluntarily pay a premium for domestically manufactured equipment itself.

Q96. The proponents' argument assumes which of the following?

- (A) Public procurement volume is itself large enough to reach competitive production scale.
- (B) Utilities can assess equipment quality as reliably as an open tender would.
- (C) Domestic manufacturers currently produce at lower per-unit cost than foreign suppliers.

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(D) Trading partners will refrain from imposing reciprocal procurement restrictions on India.

Q97. Which finding would most directly weaken the proponents' scale-based argument?

- (A) Some government utilities have missed past procurement deadlines for quite unrelated reasons.
- (B) Global demand for renewable-energy equipment is widely projected to keep growing.
- (C) A comparable scale mandate ran a decade without domestic costs converging globally.
- (D) Domestic manufacturers of this equipment currently employ several thousand skilled workers.

Q98. Which finding would most directly strengthen the proponents' argument?

- (A) A comparable manufacturer's per-unit costs fell substantially after guaranteed large-volume orders.
- (B) The government has previously used tariffs to protect other domestic industries.
- (C) Several countries have criticised India's renewable-energy trade policies at international forums.
- (D) Renewable-energy equipment prices have fluctuated considerably over the past five years.

Q99. With which of the following would the sceptics, as described in the passage, most likely disagree?

- (A) Utilities sourcing domestically before manufacturers reach scale may pay more or accept lower quality.
- (B) Reciprocal restrictions abroad are a realistic risk of a domestic-content mandate.
- (C) Renewable-energy deployment is currently under pressure to accelerate.
- (D) The scale argument's reasoning fully accounts for the possibility of retaliation abroad.

Q100. If the proponents' argument is correct, which must be true once a manufacturer's costs converge with global prices?

- (A) The government would be legally required to cancel existing procurement contracts.
- (B) No country would ever again need such a procurement-based scale mandate.
- (C) The reasoning justifying the requirement would no longer justify keeping it.
- (D) Import tariffs on all renewable-energy equipment would immediately fall to zero.

CR PASSAGE 4 (Q101-Q105)

Topic: Critical Reasoning — Urban Policy (Quick-Commerce Zoning)

Quick-commerce platforms promising delivery within ten to twenty minutes rely on a network of small, unstaffed

fulfilment warehouses — commonly called dark stores — sited as close as possible to the customers they serve, since the delivery-time promise depends on keeping the distance between warehouse and doorstep short. Because residential neighbourhoods are, by definition, where most customers live, operators have increasingly leased ground-floor units in residential buildings and converted them into dark stores, a use residential zoning rules were not written to anticipate. A municipal corporation reviewing complaint records over the past two years found that neighbourhoods with a dark store operating nearby recorded a measurably higher volume of resident complaints about delivery-vehicle congestion, double-parking and late-night engine noise than comparable neighbourhoods without one, and has proposed an ordinance requiring all dark stores to relocate to land zoned commercial or light-industrial within one year.

The corporation argues that this relocation would address the residential impact directly, since commercial and light-industrial land is zoned precisely for the traffic and operating hours that residential zoning restricts, while most of the city's commercial pockets sit close enough to residential areas that delivery times would lengthen only modestly. Because the ordinance targets the zoning mismatch rather than quick-commerce delivery as such, the corporation concludes that it would resolve residents' complaints without materially disrupting the service residents also rely on.

Operators counter that the ordinance's premise about available commercial land does not hold uniformly across the city: in several dense, older neighbourhoods, the nearest land zoned commercial or light-industrial lies well outside the radius a ten-to-twenty-minute promise can tolerate, so relocating a dark store there would not shorten delivery times modestly but would functionally withdraw the service from exactly the residential customers the ordinance is meant to protect. Operators also question the complaint data's causal reading, noting that citywide delivery-vehicle volume from all sources — food delivery, courier services and dark stores alike — has risen sharply over the same two years, so a neighbourhood's proximity to a dark store may simply track its general density of delivery activity rather than the dark store itself being the added cause of the complaints recorded against it.

Source: Adapted from a review of urban-planning and municipal-policy commentary | Published: September 2026

QUESTIONS

Q101. The corporation's argument assumes which of the following?

- (A) Delivery-vehicle congestion troubles residents more than the loss of quick delivery.

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- (B) Quick-commerce operators will absorb the cost of relocating their warehouses.
- (C) Commercial or light-industrial land exists within reach of the affected neighbourhoods.
- (D) The complaint volume recorded near dark stores has been rising each year.

Q102. Which finding would most directly weaken the corporation's argument?

- (A) A number of residents have publicly voiced support for the proposed ordinance.
- (B) A citywide map shows commercial land lying well beyond viable delivery distance.
- (C) Dark stores have opened in several other cities over the past year.
- (D) The corporation's complaint records were compiled over a full two-year period.

Q103. Which finding would most directly strengthen the corporation's argument?

- (A) Relocated dark stores elsewhere saw nearby delivery times rise only slightly.
- (B) Quick-commerce platforms have expanded rapidly across the country over three years.
- (C) Residents in several neighbourhoods have organised specifically to oppose new dark stores.
- (D) Municipal engineers have proposed adding more parking spaces near commercial zones.

Q104. Which of the following best identifies a flaw the operators raise in the corporation's reasoning?

- (A) The corporation's complaint records rest solely on unverified anonymous public tips.
- (B) The ordinance would apply retroactively to dark stores already shut down.
- (C) No resident has ever complained about riders unconnected to a dark store.
- (D) A general citywide rise in all delivery traffic may explain the pattern.

Q105. Which argument shows reasoning most similar to the operators' zoning-availability objection?

- (A) A city requires vendor relocation, but no zone exists nearby, ending service there.
- (B) A city relocates vendors to a nearby market, and most customers follow them.
- (C) A city bans street vendors outright, so residents there lose access to street food.
- (D) A city relocates vendors and later finds the congestion complaints had other causes.

AR PUZZLE SET (Q106-Q108)

Topic: Analytical Reasoning — Syllogisms

Source: Original Constructed Logic Puzzle (No external source required)

Directions: Each question below gives two statements followed by two conclusions, I and II. Taking the statements to be true even if they seem to differ from commonly known facts, decide which conclusion(s) logically follow from the statements, and choose the correct option.

QUESTIONS

Q106. Statements: All cups are plates. No plate is a spoon. Conclusions: I. No cup is a spoon. II. Some cups are not spoons.

- (A) Only conclusion I follows.
- (B) Only conclusion II follows.
- (C) Neither conclusion I nor II follows.
- (D) Both conclusions I and II follow.

Q107. Statements: Some teachers are writers. All writers are readers. Conclusions: I. Some teachers are readers. II. All readers are writers.

- (A) Only conclusion II follows.
- (B) Neither conclusion I nor II follows.
- (C) Both conclusions I and II follow.
- (D) Only conclusion I follows.

Q108. Statements: No apples are bananas. No bananas are cherries. Conclusions: I. No apples are cherries. II. Some apples are cherries.

- (A) Either conclusion I or II follows.
- (B) Only conclusion I follows.
- (C) Only conclusion II follows.
- (D) Neither conclusion I nor II follows.

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**PART 5: QUANTITATIVE
TECHNIQUES (Q109-Q120)**

CASELET 1 (Q109-Q114)

Topic: Ratio & Proportion / Percentages / Averages
(Alloy Blending and Metal Costing)

A metallurgical workshop is preparing a new alloy by combining two existing stock alloys, P and Q, each made of copper and zinc only. Stock alloy P weighs 60 kg in total, with copper and zinc present in the ratio 3:2. Stock alloy Q weighs 40 kg in total, with copper and zinc present in the ratio 1:4. The workshop melts the entire 60 kg block of P together with the entire 40 kg block of Q to form a single new alloy, R, with no metal lost in the process. In the open market, copper currently costs Rs 450 per kg and zinc costs Rs 150 per kg.

Source: Constructed Quantitative Caselet (Illustrative Figures)

QUESTIONS

Q109. What is the ratio of copper to zinc in the new alloy R?

- (A) 2 : 3
- (B) 3 : 2
- (C) 11 : 14
- (D) 14 : 11

Q110. If 10 kg of pure zinc is now stirred into alloy R, what will be the new ratio of copper to zinc in the resulting mixture?

- (A) 2 : 3
- (B) 3 : 2
- (C) 11 : 14
- (D) 27 : 28

Q111. What percentage of alloy R's total weight is zinc?

- (A) 44%
- (B) 60%
- (C) 50%
- (D) 56%

Q112. At the market prices given (copper Rs 450 per kg, zinc Rs 150 per kg), what is the total value of all the metal contained in alloy R (100 kg)?

- (A) Rs 19,800
- (B) Rs 28,200
- (C) Rs 30,000
- (D) Rs 31,800

Q113. At the same market prices, what is the average cost per kg of stock alloy Q on its own, before any blending?

- (A) Rs 300
- (B) Rs 330

- (C) Rs 390
- (D) Rs 210

Q114. In an unrelated transaction, a jeweller buys 25 kg of an alloy having exactly the same copper-to-zinc composition as stock alloy P, paying the same copper and zinc market prices, and sells the entire 25 kg at a profit of 20%. What is the jeweller's selling price for this quantity?

- (A) Rs 9,900
- (B) Rs 6,600
- (C) Rs 1,650
- (D) Rs 8,100

CASELET 2 (Q115-Q120)

Topic: Time, Speed and Distance (Train Crossings and Overtaking)

Two trains, A and B, run on parallel tracks between two stations. Train A is 180 metres long and crosses a stationary pole in 12 seconds; travelling at the same constant speed, it later crosses a railway platform in 32 seconds. Train B is 240 metres long and travels at a constant speed of 36 km/h. Both trains move in the same direction on their own parallel tracks, with Train B running ahead of Train A, so that the faster Train A gradually closes the gap and eventually overtakes Train B completely. Assume both trains maintain constant speed throughout, and treat all crossings as happening on straight, level track.

Source: Constructed Quantitative Caselet (Illustrative Figures)

QUESTIONS

Q115. What is the speed of Train A, in km/h?

- (A) 15 km/h
- (B) 45 km/h
- (C) 54 km/h
- (D) 36 km/h

Q116. What is the length of the platform that Train A crosses in 32 seconds?

- (A) 480 m
- (B) 300 m
- (C) 660 m
- (D) 390 m

Q117. What is the speed of Train B, in m/s?

- (A) 10 m/s
- (B) 36 m/s
- (C) 20 m/s
- (D) 12 m/s

Q118. How long will Train A take to completely overtake Train B, from the moment Train A's front first draws level with Train B's rear, to the moment Train A's rear finally clears Train B's front?

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- (A) 420 seconds
- (B) 36 seconds
- (C) 48 seconds
- (D) 84 seconds

Q119. What is the ratio of the speed of Train A to the speed of Train B?

- (A) 2 : 3
- (B) 3 : 2
- (C) 3 : 4
- (D) 9 : 4

Q120. Suppose Train A's speed is increased to a constant 20 m/s. How long will it now take Train A to cross a different platform, one that is 420 metres long?

- (A) 40 seconds
- (B) 21 seconds
- (C) 30 seconds
- (D) 9 seconds

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