MOCK TEST | 16 MAY 2026

CLAT 2027 Mock Test 09

English Language + Current Affairs & General Knowledge

Test Code	CLAT Mock Test 09
Total Questions	120 (80 English + 40 GK)
Total Marks / Duration	120 Marks | 120 Minutes
Marking Scheme	+1 Correct | –0.25 Wrong | 0 Unattempted
Format	100% Passage-Based (24 Passages)
Answer Marking	Use the previously finalised CLAT Gurukul OMR Sheet

Section	Questions	Passages	Marks
English Language	Q1 – Q80	16 × 5 Qs	80
Current Affairs & GK	Q81 – Q120	8 × 5 Qs	40

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. This test booklet contains **120 questions** divided into two sections. All questions are compulsory.
2. All questions are **passage-based**. Read each passage carefully before attempting the questions that follow.
3. Each question has **four options** (A, B, C, D). Choose the **most appropriate** answer.
4. **Marking:** +1 correct | –0.25 incorrect | 0 unattempted.
5. Use the **OMR Answer Sheet** provided separately. Use **blue/black ballpoint pen** only. Fill bubbles completely.
6. **Do not** use pencil, gel pen, or whitener on the OMR sheet.
7. Mark **only one bubble** per question. Multiple marks = **cancellation**.
8. Do not fold, tear, or damage the OMR sheet.
9. **Rough work** may be done in the blank space of this booklet. No separate rough sheets provided.
10. Total duration: **120 minutes** (2 hours). No extra time.
11. Do not leave the hall before the test concludes without the invigilator's permission.
12. Any **unfair means** (mobile phones, electronic devices, communication) = immediate disqualification.
13. **Suggested time:** English ~80 min | GK ~40 min.

DO NOT OPEN THIS BOOKLET UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO DO SO.

All the best!

SECTION I — ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Directions: Read each passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. Each passage is followed by five questions based on its content.

Passage 1 (Questions 1–5)

Frege, Sense, and the Puzzle of Identity

Gottlob Frege's distinction between sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung) is, on the standard reading, the foundation stone of modern analytic philosophy of language, and its motivating puzzle is, in form, embarrassingly elementary. Consider the two true identity statements "the morning star is the morning star" and "the morning star is the evening star". On a naive theory in which the meaning of a name is exhausted by its bearer, both statements predicate self-identity of Venus and ought, accordingly, to be equally trivial. Yet the first is a perspicuous truism, knowable a priori, while the second records a substantive astronomical discovery that took the Babylonians some centuries to consolidate. The asymmetry is real; the naive theory cannot accommodate it.

Frege's resolution was to interpose, between a name and its referent, a third item: the mode of presentation under which the referent is given. "The morning star" and "the evening star" pick out the same celestial body but present it differently — once as the brightest object before dawn, once as the brightest after dusk — and these differing senses are what carry the cognitive value that the bare reference cannot. The second statement is informative because its senses differ; the first is trivial because they do not.

The doctrine has not gone unchallenged. Saul Kripke, in lectures whose informality belies their consequence, argued that proper names function as rigid designators that refer directly, without the mediation of any descriptive sense, and that the apparent puzzles dissolve once we attend to the distinction between necessity and apriority. Whether Kripke's rigidity thesis is, in the end, compatible with a residual Fregean account of cognitive significance is among the more thoroughly contested questions of the literature; the dispute has the agreeable property of producing fewer footnotes per page than most of its rivals.

1. The motivating puzzle that Frege's sense/reference distinction is introduced to resolve is best stated as which of the following?

(A) Two identity statements with the same referent on both sides can differ in cognitive value, which a theory equating meaning with reference cannot accommodate.
(B) Identity statements involving celestial bodies were historically treated, in classical antiquity, as belonging to a special category of necessary truths inaccessible to ordinary discourse.
(C) The Babylonians' eventual identification of the morning and evening stars demonstrates that astronomical knowledge proceeds by the gradual elimination of co-referential names from ordinary language.
(D) Naive theories of meaning, on a careful examination, turn out to entail that no two distinct names can ever co-refer to a single object in the actual world.

2. Frege's notion of sense, as the author presents it, is best characterised as:

(A) A descriptive equivalent of the name, such that the name is logically dispensable in favour of the description in any sufficiently rigorous discourse.
(B) A purely psychological item, residing in the mind of the individual speaker and varying without constraint from speaker to speaker.
(C) A mode of presentation under which the referent is given, interposed between a name and the object it picks out.
(D) An attribute of the referent itself, by virtue of which the referent is the kind of object that admits of being named in the first place.

3. Kripke's challenge to Frege, as the author summarises it, turns principally on which of the following?

(A) The empirical claim that ordinary speakers, when surveyed, do not in fact associate any uniform descriptive content with the proper names they competently employ.
(B) The claim that proper names function as rigid designators referring directly, and that the puzzles dissolve once necessity is distinguished from apriority.
(C) The historical claim that Frege's own writings, properly construed, never committed him to the descriptivist position that subsequent commentators attributed to him.
(D) The methodological claim that the philosophy of language ought to confine itself to formal languages and abstain from any account of natural-language proper names.

4. As used in the first paragraph, the word "perspicuous" most nearly means:

(A) Excessively detailed and consequently tedious to follow.
(B) Clear and immediately intelligible without further explanation.
(C) Conveying its meaning by indirection or implication rather than direct statement.
(D) Belonging to a technical vocabulary inaccessible to the ordinary reader.

5. Which of the following, if established, would most weaken Frege's resolution of the identity puzzle as the passage presents it?

(A) Evidence that the historical Babylonian astronomers eventually came to identify the morning and evening stars by means of careful long-term observation of their orbits in the relevant scholarly literature on the subject.
(B) Evidence that a substantial minority of contemporary philosophers of language regard the Fregean framework as no longer the dominant paradigm in the field of theoretical semantics.
(C) Evidence that competent speakers of a language reliably associate no distinct mode of presentation with either "the morning star" or "the evening star" beyond the bare designation of Venus.
(D) Evidence that the German term "Sinn" admits, in Frege's own usage, of several closely related senses that subsequent translators have not always rendered with full uniformity.

Passage 2 (Questions 6–10)

Hart, Dworkin, and the Place of Principles in Law

H. L. A. Hart's reconstruction of a legal system as the union of primary and secondary rules, governed by a single rule of recognition by which officials identify what counts as law, is among the most economical achievements of twentieth-century jurisprudence. On Hart's account, the rule of recognition is itself not a rule that has been laid down but a complex social practice among officials, and its existence is, in the relevant sense, a matter of fact rather than of further legal validity. Law, in this picture, is what the practice of recognition picks out; what falls outside it is, however worthy, not law.

Ronald Dworkin's celebrated objection took the form of a counter-example. Confronted with the New York case of Riggs v. Palmer, in which a grandson who had murdered his grandfather was nevertheless held barred from inheriting under the latter's will, Dworkin observed that no posited rule of the relevant statutes barred the inheritance; what barred it was the principle that no one ought to profit from his own wrong. Principles of this kind, Dworkin argued, are unmistakably part of the law — judges treat them as binding, and decisions departing from them are open to criticism on legal rather than merely moral grounds — yet they cannot be captured by any rule of recognition framed in terms of pedigree, since their authority depends on their content rather than their source.

Hart's posthumous reply conceded ground without surrendering the framework. The rule of recognition, he allowed, might itself incorporate moral criteria, so that the validity of certain norms turns in part on their content; what it could not do was dissolve the distinction between law and morality without which the entire positivist project collapses. Whether the concession amounts to a graceful refinement or a fatal one remains an active question.

6. Hart's rule of recognition, as the author presents it, is best characterised as:

(A) An exhaustive enumeration of the substantive rules of the legal system in question, periodically revised by a designated legislative authority.
(B) A fundamental statute, formally enacted at the founding of the legal order, whose own validity is in turn guaranteed by the written constitution of that order.
(C) A moral principle, antecedent to any actual legal system, by which the legitimacy of particular legal norms is appraised from an external philosophical standpoint.
(D) A complex social practice among officials, by reference to which the legal validity of other norms is established and which is itself a matter of fact.

7. Dworkin's argument in Riggs v. Palmer, as the author summarises it, is best stated as which of the following?

(A) The statutes governing the case were, on a properly historical reading, never intended to apply to murderers of testators, so that no question of principle in fact arose.
(B) The result, though intuitively just, was strictly speaking an extra-legal moral imposition by the court that ought, on a strict positivist view, to have been corrected on appeal.
(C) The result was reached by the application of a legal principle whose authority depended on its content rather than on any pedigree captured by a rule of recognition.
(D) The case is a marginal one whose disposition reveals nothing of general jurisprudential significance, having been decided on narrow grounds of evidentiary insufficiency.

8. Hart's posthumous reply, as the passage describes it, accommodated Dworkin's challenge by:

(A) Reformulating the rule of recognition as a strictly moral standard, thereby aligning his position with that of contemporary natural-law theorists in the broad sense.
(B) Conceding that legal principles of the kind Dworkin identified are, on closer examination, simply moral principles that masquerade as legal ones in judicial discourse.
(C) Insisting that no genuine case of the kind Dworkin describes has in fact been correctly decided in any common-law jurisdiction in modern times.
(D) Allowing that the rule of recognition might itself incorporate moral criteria, while denying that this dissolves the distinction between law and morality.

9. The author's overall presentation of the Hart–Dworkin debate is best described as:

(A) Historical narration, ordering the relevant works chronologically without engaging with the substantive philosophical issues that divide the protagonists.
(B) Polemical advocacy for the Dworkinian view, with Hart's framework presented chiefly in order to be dismantled by reference to Riggs v. Palmer.
(C) Sceptical detachment, treating the dispute as a verbal one in which neither side has identified a genuine question requiring jurisprudential adjudication.
(D) Balanced exposition, presenting both positions on their strongest terms without decisively endorsing either as the correct resolution of the dispute.

10. Suppose it could be shown that, across every common-law jurisdiction, judges who appeal to principles of the kind Dworkin describes are reliably overruled on appeal by reference to the posited statutory text. The strongest implication of this finding for the passage's argument would be that:

(A) Dworkin's claim that such principles are unmistakably part of the law would be considerably weakened, since the practice of higher courts would suggest that their authority is not in fact recognised as legal.
(B) Hart's framework would, despite the finding, remain vulnerable on the very ground on which Dworkin originally pressed it, since the existence of even a single appellate decision in Dworkin's favour would suffice.
(C) The distinction between primary and secondary rules would have to be reformulated to accommodate the appellate practice in question, with consequences the passage has already canvassed.
(D) The natural-law tradition, against which both Hart and Dworkin are tacitly arrayed, would receive a powerful empirical vindication from the appellate evidence so described.

Passage 3 (Questions 11–15)

Bretton Woods and the Discipline of Anchored Money

The monetary order designed at Bretton Woods in 1944, and operative in something like its intended form for roughly a quarter-century thereafter, was an attempt to reconcile two imperatives whose tension had defined the interwar catastrophe: the desire for the discipline of a fixed external standard, and the need to preserve a national capacity for counter-cyclical demand management. The classical gold standard had supplied the first at the cost of the second; the floating regimes of the 1930s had reversed the trade. The architects at Bretton Woods — Keynes for Britain, Harry Dexter White for the United States — proposed a third arrangement: national currencies pegged to the dollar at adjustable rates, the dollar itself convertible into gold at a fixed price, and capital movements between countries held under sufficient restraint that the pegs could survive ordinary speculative pressure.

The arrangement worked tolerably until the conditions that supported it ceased to obtain. The United States, exporting capital to a recovering Europe and financing a war in Indochina, accumulated dollar liabilities abroad whose convertibility into a finite stock of gold became, by the late 1960s, a polite fiction. The Nixon administration's unilateral suspension of convertibility in August 1971 was less the cause of the system's collapse than its formal acknowledgement, and the floating regime that followed was the residual, not the chosen, outcome.

What is striking, in retrospect, is how stipulative were the conditions for the system's success: a hegemonic supplier of the anchor currency willing to subordinate its domestic policy to international stability; capital controls that could, in fact, be maintained; and a sufficient asymmetry of crisis pressure between deficit and surplus countries that adjustment, when it came, fell predominantly on the former. None of these conditions has obtained for the international monetary system of the half-century since, and the question whether they could in principle be reconstituted is, on the present evidence, not encouraging.

11. The tension that the Bretton Woods architects sought to reconcile, as the author identifies it, is best stated as which of the following?

(A) The need to finance reconstruction in Europe against the parallel need to extend development assistance to newly independent post-colonial states.
(B) The wish to expand international trade against the requirement that domestic agricultural producers be sheltered from external competition.
(C) The desire for the discipline of a fixed external standard against the need to preserve a national capacity for counter-cyclical demand management.
(D) The demand for an international reserve asset insulated from inflation against the demand that such an asset be convertible into circulating national currencies.

12. According to the passage, the principal architectural features of the Bretton Woods system included all of the following EXCEPT:

(A) National currencies pegged to the United States dollar at adjustable rates.
(B) Free movement of capital across borders, sustained by an international agreement to refrain from any peacetime restrictions on cross-border financial flows.

(C) Convertibility of the dollar itself into gold at a fixed official price.
(D) Restrictions on capital movements sufficient to allow the pegs to withstand ordinary speculative pressure.

13. The author's characterisation of the Nixon administration's suspension of convertibility in 1971 is best described as:

(A) Treating it as the consequence of a long-running diplomatic dispute with the European partners that the surrounding documentary record amply substantiates.
(B) Treating it as the principal cause of the subsequent collapse and as the original sin from which the inflationary 1970s flowed in an essentially uninterrupted line.
(C) Treating it as a tactical manoeuvre, intended to be temporary, which was overtaken by events its authors had not foreseen at the time of the decision.
(D) Treating it as the formal acknowledgement, rather than the cause, of a system whose supporting conditions had already ceased to obtain.

14. The author's tone in the closing paragraph, on the prospects for reconstituting the conditions of the Bretton Woods system, is best described as:

(A) Pessimistic, on the basis of the absence of those conditions throughout the half-century since.
(B) Optimistic, on the basis of the gradual emergence of new co-ordinating institutions in the period after the formal collapse of the system.
(C) Indifferent, the passage treating the question of reconstitution as belonging to a different order of analysis altogether.
(D) Polemical, the closing paragraph being directed less at the question of reconstitution than at the policy preferences of a particular contemporary school of opinion.

15. Suppose recently uncovered archival material established that the United States had, throughout the 1960s, been entirely willing to subordinate its domestic monetary policy to the requirements of the gold-dollar peg, and that the convertibility crisis was instead precipitated by sudden speculative attacks of a kind no fixed-exchange-rate system could have withstood. The strongest implication of this finding for the passage's argument would be that:

(A) Keynes's original design, in retrospect, would be vindicated as the only feasible blueprint and the post-war system's eventual collapse traced to deviations from it.
(B) The Nixon administration's role in the system's collapse would, on the strength of the new finding, have to be understood as essentially exculpatory in character as that account has been refined in subsequent commentary on the dominant reading of the contemporary secondary sources for reasons that have been the subject of substantial discussion.
(C) The passage's identification of a hegemonic supplier of the anchor currency "willing to subordinate its domestic policy to international stability" as a precondition of success would itself need to be re-examined, since the supposed failure of that willingness now would not have been the failure point.
(D) The capital-control component of the original architecture, having played no causal role in the system's eventual collapse, could safely be omitted from any future reconstruction of the regime.

Passage 4 (Questions 16–20)

Empson and the Architectonics of Ambiguity

William Empson's Seven Types of Ambiguity, published when its author was twenty-three, did for literary criticism something close to what Frege had done for the philosophy of language: it took a faculty that had previously been treated as a vice of imprecise expression and refashioned it as the constitutive resource of a serious art. Ambiguity, on Empson's account, is not a confusion to be cleared up but the simultaneous presence, in a single grammatical unit, of distinct meanings whose interaction generates the specific cognitive density we call poetic. Where ordinary discourse aspires to a perspicuous resolution of its constructions, poetic discourse exploits their irresolution as a positive resource.

The seven types, ranging from the relatively decorous (a detail effective in several ways at once) to the radically vertiginous (two meanings within a word that contradict one another and the contradiction itself becomes the point), were not meant as a closed taxonomy but as a graduated scale of increasing semantic strain. The taxonomy is, in this respect, ostensive rather than stipulative: it indicates by means of carefully analysed examples what the critic should learn to notice, rather than supplying a definition by which ambiguities in the wild could be mechanically classified.

The book has not lacked detractors. Some have charged Empson with a virtuosity so prodigious that ambiguities multiply under his gaze in passages whose authors plainly intended none; others have argued that the architectonic structure of the seven types is, on examination, an artifice imposed on what is really a continuum admitting of no sharp distinctions. Both criticisms touch something true; neither alters the fact that, after Empson, the unambiguous lyric has been increasingly difficult to take entirely seriously as an artistic ideal.

16. Empson's central contention about ambiguity, as the author presents it, is best stated as which of the following?

(A) Ambiguity is not a confusion to be cleared up but a constitutive resource by which the cognitive density of poetic discourse is generated.
(B) Ambiguity is, on careful examination, indistinguishable from sheer obscurity, and the apparent value attached to it in modern criticism reflects a confusion of categories.
(C) Ambiguity is a regrettable feature of poetic discourse which the most accomplished poets manage, by careful craftsmanship, to minimise though never to abolish.
(D) Ambiguity arises in poetry chiefly from the historical accidents of vocabulary change and is therefore best understood as a problem for the literary historian rather than for the critic.

17. The author distinguishes Empson's taxonomy as "ostensive rather than stipulative". The point of this distinction is that:

(A) The taxonomy is presented in the form of definitions whose precision exceeds anything previously attempted within the discipline of literary criticism.
(B) The taxonomy proceeds by exhibiting paradigm examples that train the critic's attention rather than by supplying definitions for mechanical classification.
(C) The taxonomy is, properly speaking, a polemical intervention in the disputes of its day rather than a contribution to the systematic study of poetic language.
(D) The taxonomy is empirically derived from a large corpus of poems chosen by representative statistical sampling from English verse of every century.

18. The detractors of Empson's project, as the author summarises them, advance which TWO criticisms?

(A) That he overestimates the role of the unconscious in poetic composition, and that he underestimates the role of conscious craftsmanship in resolving textual ambiguities.
(B) That his examples are drawn too narrowly from a small subset of metaphysical poets, and that his prose style is too dense to communicate his insights to ordinary readers.
(C) That his virtuosity finds ambiguities where the authors intended none, and that the architectonic structure of the seven types is an artifice imposed on a continuum.
(D) That his project is excessively dependent on the techniques of formal logic, and that it neglects the historical and social conditions of literary production.

19. The author's overall stance toward Empson's book, as it emerges from the closing paragraph, is best described as:

(A) Adopting a position of detached neutrality and offering no settled view of the book's lasting significance for literary criticism.
(B) Endorsing every aspect of the book without reservation and dismissing the criticisms as motivated by a narrow professional jealousy.
(C) Granting the force of certain criticisms while maintaining that the book has nevertheless reshaped what the unambiguous lyric can plausibly aspire to.
(D) Repudiating the book on the basis of the very criticisms that the closing paragraph has just summarised in some detail.

20. The author would be MOST inclined to disagree with which of the following claims?

(A) Some of Empson's analyses do find ambiguities in passages whose authors plainly intended none, but the criticism does not by itself overturn his framework.
(B) Empson's seven types are best read as a graduated scale of increasing semantic strain rather than as a sharply defined enumerative classification.
(C) The simultaneous presence of distinct meanings within a single grammatical unit is a positive resource of poetic discourse on Empson's account.
(D) After Empson, the unambiguous lyric can still be taken entirely seriously as an artistic ideal in the same form it took before his intervention.

Passage 5 (Questions 21–25)

Kuhn, Paradigms, and the Incommensurability Thesis

Thomas Kuhn's Structure of Scientific Revolutions advanced, almost as an aside to its principal historical thesis, a doctrine that has caused more philosophical agitation than any of the historical claims for which it is supposedly the support. Successive paradigms in a mature science, Kuhn maintained, are not merely different but, in a sense he was at pains to qualify, incommensurable: they organise the phenomena under investigation in incompatible ways, deploy the central theoretical terms with subtly different meanings, and supply, between them, no neutral observation language by reference to which a clean comparison could be effected.

The thesis has been variously received. Defenders have read it as a measured observation about the holism of scientific theories — about the way changes in the meaning of any one theoretical term propagate, by way of the term's inferential connections, through the system as a whole. Detractors have read it as a more vertiginous claim, on which adherents of competing paradigms are not even talking about the same world, with the consequence that scientific progress, in any robust sense, is unintelligible. Kuhn's

own later writings show him retreating from the second construal while declining to renounce the first.

What is often missed in the polemic is that the incommensurability thesis, even on the milder reading, has no straightforward sceptical consequence. The fact that two paradigms cannot be compared by means of a single neutral observation language does not entail that they cannot be compared at all; it entails only that the comparison must be effected piecemeal, by the laborious work of translation between the two vocabularies, in which something is invariably lost and something invariably learned. Whether what is learned, taken together across the relevant cases, suffices to underwrite the ordinary scientist's sense of progress remains a question on which philosophers of science have not yet, in fairness, reached consensus.

21. Kuhn's incommensurability thesis, as the author presents the milder reading defended by his supporters, holds that:

(A) Adherents of competing paradigms are quite literally not talking about the same world, with the result that the very notion of scientific progress is unintelligible.
(B) Changes in the meaning of any one theoretical term within a paradigm propagate through the system by way of the term's inferential connections, in a manner that prevents clean neutral comparison.
(C) Successive paradigms in a mature science can in fact be compared without difficulty once their central theoretical terms have been translated into the language of formal logic.
(D) The history of science exhibits no genuine cases of paradigm shift, the appearance of such shifts being an artifact of retrospective historiographical organisation in the ordinary technical sense of the expression.

22. Kuhn's own later writings, as the author describes them, are best characterised as:

(A) Avoiding the question altogether and turning to historical case studies in which the incommensurability thesis plays no observable role.
(B) Repudiating the incommensurability thesis in its entirety as an immature formulation that had outlived whatever expository value it had originally possessed.
(C) Endorsing the more vertiginous construal in increasingly explicit terms as the criticisms of his earlier work accumulated in the literature.
(D) Retreating from the more vertiginous construal of incommensurability while declining to renounce the milder one.

23. The author's principal point in the closing paragraph is that:

(A) The incommensurability thesis straightforwardly entails the impossibility of scientific progress, and the only honest response to it is to abandon the realist conception of science.
(B) The incommensurability thesis is, on a careful examination, devoid of any non-trivial content, and its philosophical reception has been correspondingly overheated.
(C) The incommensurability thesis, even on the milder reading, has no straightforward sceptical consequence, since paradigms may still be compared piecemeal by the laborious work of translation between their vocabularies.
(D) The incommensurability thesis applies only to the human sciences and has no proper application to the mature physical sciences with which Kuhn was principally concerned.

24. As used in the first paragraph, the word "holism" most nearly refers to:

(A) The view that the meaning of a theoretical term depends on its inferential connections to other terms within the same theoretical system.
(B) The view that scientific theories should be evaluated by reference to their aesthetic unity rather than by reference to their empirical adequacy.
(C) An ethical doctrine according to which the value of a scientific finding depends on its contribution to the welfare of the community at large.
(D) A methodological recommendation that scientific theories be tested only as entire systems and never by reference to particular predictions.

25. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's conciliatory position in the closing paragraph?

(A) Philological evidence that Kuhn's use of the term "incommensurable" was modelled, with some precision, on its use in the Greek mathematical tradition concerning irrational quantities.
(B) Survey evidence that the majority of working scientists, when asked, profess broad sympathy with the more vertiginous construal of incommensurability rather than the milder one.
(C) Detailed historical studies showing that, in actual cases of paradigm shift, scientists routinely manage substantive comparisons between the old and new vocabularies by exactly the kind of piecemeal translation the paragraph describes.
(D) Bibliometric evidence that citations to Structure of Scientific Revolutions have risen substantially in the philosophical literature of the last two decades as the relevant authorities have repeatedly affirmed in the standard formulation employed by the discipline.

Passage 6 (Questions 26–30)

Nagel's Bat and the Subjectivity of Experience

Thomas Nagel's essay "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" is, in the literature of the philosophy of mind, the canonical statement of a worry that subsequent decades of cognitive science have not dissolved so much as deepened. The worry can be put with some economy. For any conscious creature, there is something it is like to be that creature — a subjective character its experience has from the inside. A bat, which navigates by echolocation, presumably has experiences whose subjective character is profoundly unlike anything within the human imaginative repertoire. The objective resources of physiology, however perfected, supply us with the structural facts about bat sonar; they leave the subjective character of bat experience untouched, and there is no obvious route by which they could be made to deliver it.

Nagel's target, characteristically, is not any particular reductive theory of mind but the family resemblance shared by all such theories: each undertakes to exhibit the mental as nothing but a structural arrangement of objectively specifiable elements, and each, on his account, must accordingly leave out the very feature — subjectivity, the having of a point of view — for whose explanation the theory was originally undertaken. The argument is not that reductive accounts have so far failed; it is that, given the form they must take, they cannot but fail. To know what a bat objectively does is, on this view, simply not yet to know what it is like for the bat to do it.

The argument has been variously resisted. Daniel Dennett has long maintained that the apparent residue Nagel points to is itself an artifact of an introspective illusion which a properly sophisticated cognitive science would dissolve. Others have proposed that subjective character is a genuine but distinct property requiring its own basic theoretical posits. Whether either response succeeds is, on the present state of the debate, very much an open question.

26. Nagel's central worry, as the author presents it, is best stated as which of the following?

(A) The objective resources of physiology, however perfected, leave the subjective character of a creature's experience untouched, and there is no obvious route by which they could be made to deliver it.

(B) The behavioural repertoire of a creature, however carefully observed, does not by itself establish whether the creature is conscious at all in the sense that ordinarily attaches to the term.

(C) The functional organisation of the bat's nervous system is too distant from that of any familiar primate to support a properly comparative cognitive ethology.

(D) The mathematical resources required to model echolocation exceed those available within the standard physiological literature of the period in which Nagel's essay was published.

27. Nagel's argument, as the author construes it, is best characterised as:

(A) A provisional empirical complaint that existing reductive theories of mind have happened, so far, to fall short of their explanatory goals.

(B) A principled argument that, given the form reductive theories must take, they cannot but leave out the very feature for whose explanation they were undertaken.

(C) A historical thesis about the gradual emergence of subjective consciousness across the evolutionary record of vertebrate cognition.

(D) A methodological recommendation that the philosophy of mind confine itself to the analysis of ordinary language and refrain from speculation about non-human animals.

28. Dennett's response to Nagel, as the author summarises it, holds that:

(A) The empirical literature on bat echolocation, while incomplete, already supplies in essentials whatever subjective characterisation of bat experience could in principle be required.

(B) The subjective character of experience is a real and irreducible feature of the world requiring its own basic theoretical posits within the philosophy of mind.

(C) The very question "What is it like to be a bat?" is grammatically defective and ought not to have been formulated in those terms at the outset of the discussion.

(D) The apparent residue Nagel identifies is itself an artifact of an introspective illusion which a properly sophisticated cognitive science would dissolve.

29. The author's overall presentation of the contemporary state of the debate, in the closing sentences, is best described as:

(A) Announcing a settled verdict in Nagel's favour as having now been reached among the leading workers in the field of the philosophy of mind.

(B) Reporting that whether either of the principal responses to Nagel succeeds remains, on the present state of the debate, very much an open question.

(C) Dismissing the entire debate as a verbal one in which the participants have failed to identify the genuine substantive issue dividing them from one another.

(D) Predicting that the debate will, in the near future, be superseded by developments in computational neuroscience whose outline is now becoming clear.

30. Suppose that a complete physiological account of bat echolocation were one day developed which, when read by a human, did in fact convey, with full vividness, what it is like for a bat to

echolocate. The strongest implication of this hypothetical for Nagel's argument as the passage presents it would be that:

(A) It would significantly undermine Nagel's central worry, by exhibiting precisely the kind of route from objective physiology to subjective character that the argument holds to be unavailable.
(B) It would confirm Nagel's central worry, since the very intelligibility of the supposed conveyance would presuppose the residue of subjective character he identifies.
(C) It would have no bearing on Nagel's argument, which is concerned strictly with human rather than with bat consciousness in the philosophical literature at large.
(D) It would, by itself, decide the long-running scholarly debate between reductive and non-reductive accounts of mind in favour of the latter on the most natural construction of the available evidence in line with the position generally taken in the journals.

Passage 7 (Questions 31–35)

Kant and the Mathematical Sublime

Among the more striking, and least domesticated, doctrines of Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgement is his account of the sublime, and within that account it is the so-called mathematical sublime that has resisted easy assimilation. The beautiful, on Kant's analysis, is what pleases in the harmonious play between imagination and understanding when we contemplate a form whose finite limits the imagination can comfortably encompass. The sublime, by contrast, is what arises precisely when the imagination encounters something — the night sky, an Alpine prospect, the abstract magnitude of a very large number — whose magnitude defeats its synthetic capacity. The peculiarity of the experience is that this defeat is itself the occasion of a positive pleasure.

The positive pleasure does not arise, on Kant's account, from the magnitude itself, which on the contrary frustrates and even pains. It arises, by an indirection that has cost commentators a great deal of ink, from the imagination's very failure to encompass the magnitude. In failing, the imagination indirectly discloses to reason a faculty of its own — the capacity to think the absolutely great, the infinite, the totality — that exceeds anything imagination could have presented. The defeat of the lower faculty becomes the occasion on which the higher faculty exhibits, to itself, its own characteristic vocation.

It is easy to mistake this account for mere mystification, particularly if one is in the habit of treating the imagination as a purely receptive faculty. The doctrine is, however, structurally precise: it identifies a determinate failure on the part of one cognitive faculty as the necessary condition for the manifestation, to consciousness, of a power proper to another. Whether such an architecture of mind survives, in any recognisable form, the developments of subsequent cognitive science is contestable; that it is, in Kant's hands, neither vague nor evasive, is harder to deny than its modern reception sometimes suggests.

31. The Kantian distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, as the author presents it, turns on which of the following?

(A) Whether the imagination can comfortably encompass the form in question, or whether the form's magnitude defeats its synthetic capacity.
(B) Whether the object of contemplation belongs to the order of nature or rather to the order of human artistic production.
(C) Whether the pleasure occasioned by the object is socially shared or rather restricted to the private experience of the individual perceiver.
(D) Whether the object in question is morally elevating or rather morally indifferent to the perceiver who contemplates it on a given occasion.

32. The positive pleasure of the mathematical sublime, as the author construes Kant, arises from:

(A) The recollection, prompted by such magnitudes, of comparable experiences from the perceiver's earlier life and education in the relevant tradition.
(B) The successful synthesis by the imagination of even the very largest magnitudes within a single integrated representation of the form.
(C) The agreeable contrast between the magnitude of the sublime object and the comparative modesty of the surrounding cognitive field.
(D) The imagination's very failure to encompass a magnitude, which indirectly discloses to reason its own faculty of thinking the absolutely great.

33. The author's principal defence of Kant's account against the charge of mystification is that:

(A) It is, as a matter of intellectual history, the source from which all subsequent accounts of the sublime within European aesthetics have been derived in one form or another.
(B) It has been extensively defended by contemporary developmental cognitive scientists whose findings, the passage reports, broadly confirm its central architectural commitments.
(C) It receives, in Kant's own subsequent writings, a series of detailed reformulations that progressively eliminate the obscurities of its first statement in the third Critique.
(D) It identifies a determinate failure on the part of one cognitive faculty as the necessary condition for the manifestation of a power proper to another, which is structurally precise rather than vague or

evasive.

34. The author would be LEAST likely to endorse which of the following statements about the Kantian sublime?

(A) Kant's account is, on careful reading, ultimately a vague piece of metaphysical mystification of the kind to which the modern reader is rightly indifferent.
(B) The pleasure characteristic of the sublime does not arise from the magnitude itself, which on the contrary frustrates and even pains under the framework that the passage itself adopts.
(C) The structure of the doctrine identifies a failure of one cognitive faculty as the occasion for the manifestation of a power proper to another.
(D) Whether the Kantian architecture of mind survives in recognisable form the developments of subsequent cognitive science is itself a contestable question.

35. Which of the following, if established, would most weaken the author's defence of the structural precision of Kant's account?

(A) Detailed textual evidence that Kant himself, in the relevant passages of the third Critique, freely conflated the imagination's incapacity to encompass a magnitude with the very different incapacity to comprehend a quality.
(B) Evidence that the contemplation of magnitudes of the kind Kant describes does in fact occasion, in many ordinary observers, the kind of positive pleasure his account predicts.
(C) Evidence that the distinction between beautiful and sublime is variously drawn in the aesthetic writings of Kant's eighteenth-century predecessors and contemporaries.
(D) Evidence that Kant's own preferred examples of the mathematical sublime were drawn predominantly from the astronomical literature of his immediate intellectual milieu.

Passage 8 (Questions 36–40)

Gadamer, Prejudice, and the Hermeneutic Circle

Hans-Georg Gadamer's Truth and Method advanced, against the methodological self-image of the human sciences inherited from the nineteenth century, a series of theses whose unfashionable cast was very much the point. The central one concerned the role of prejudice — Vorurteil — in understanding. The Enlightenment, on Gadamer's reading, had bequeathed to the human sciences a programme of methodological emancipation: the interpreter was to set aside the prejudices supplied by tradition and approach the text from an Archimedean point of presuppositionless reason. Gadamer's contention was that this programme misdescribes the conditions under which understanding actually occurs.

Far from being an obstacle to understanding, prejudices in the wide Gadamerian sense — the inherited horizon of expectations and concerns that the interpreter brings to the text — are its enabling condition. There is no Archimedean point from which understanding could begin; there is only the historically situated interpreter, whose situation supplies the very questions in light of which the text is intelligible at all. The work of interpretation does not consist in setting these prejudices aside but in subjecting them to a particular kind of test: the interpreter, encountering in the text a resistance to her initial expectations, revises those expectations in light of the resistance, in a process Gadamer calls the fusion of horizons.

The doctrine has been a recurrent target of methodological critics, who have charged that it dissolves the distinction between interpretations that are well-founded and those that are merely confident, since every interpreter, on Gadamer's account, is licensed to import her prejudices into the text. The Gadamerian rejoinder is that the test of an interpretation is not the absence of prejudice — an impossible standard — but the willingness, repeatedly exercised, to allow the text to disconfirm the prejudices with which one approaches it. Whether this rejoinder fully meets the objection is, again, contested.

36. Gadamer's central thesis about prejudice, as the author presents it, is best stated as which of the following?

(A) Prejudices supplied by tradition are an obstacle to understanding that the Enlightenment programme of methodological emancipation correctly proposed to eliminate as that proposition is conventionally understood.
(B) Prejudices in the wide Gadamerian sense are not an obstacle to understanding but its enabling condition, supplying the questions in light of which the text is intelligible at all.
(C) Prejudices are unavoidable features of human cognition whose influence on interpretation can, with sufficient methodological discipline, be reduced to a negligible residue.
(D) Prejudices are valuable in the practical arts but ought to play no role in the work of textual interpretation as it is conducted within the modern human sciences.

37. Gadamer's "fusion of horizons", as the author describes it, refers to:

(A) The eventual convergence of all competent interpreters on a single canonical reading of any sufficiently well-attested literary or philosophical text.
(B) The process by which the interpreter, encountering in the text a resistance to her initial expectations, revises those expectations in light of the resistance.

(C) The methodological injunction that the interpreter consciously suspend her own historical situation in order to enter into that of the text she is reading.
(D) The social process by which a community of scholars gradually establishes a shared institutional framework for the interpretation of its received canon.

38. The methodological critics of Gadamer, as the author summarises them, charge his doctrine with:

(A) Confining itself to the interpretation of canonical literary works and refusing to extend its analysis to the wider range of textual practices considered by the modern human sciences.
(B) Reviving an essentially Enlightenment programme of methodological emancipation under cover of an apparently anti-Enlightenment vocabulary on the version of the doctrine most often defended in the conditions presupposed by the passage.
(C) Dissolving the distinction between interpretations that are well-founded and those that are merely confident, since every interpreter is licensed to import her prejudices into the text.
(D) Presupposing a substantive theory of historical progress that the rest of Truth and Method is in fact concerned, throughout, to repudiate.

39. The Gadamerian rejoinder to the methodological critics, as the author presents it, is best stated as which of the following?

(A) The methodological critics presuppose precisely the Archimedean standpoint whose impossibility was the original target of Gadamer's argument, and therefore beg the question against him.
(B) The test of an interpretation is not the absence of prejudice but the willingness, repeatedly exercised, to allow the text to disconfirm the prejudices with which one approaches it.
(C) The methodological critics have failed to read Truth and Method in its entirety and have, in consequence, mistaken its principal thesis for one of its incidental supporting remarks.
(D) The methodological critics confuse the descriptive claim that understanding is historically situated with the normative claim that all interpretations are equally well-founded.

40. The author cites all of the following as elements of the Gadamerian account of understanding EXCEPT:

(A) The willingness, repeatedly exercised, to allow the text to disconfirm the prejudices with which one approaches it.
(B) The role of prejudice as the enabling condition rather than the obstacle of understanding.
(C) The fusion of horizons, in which the interpreter's initial expectations are revised in light of the text's resistance.
(D) The availability, in principle, of an Archimedean standpoint of presuppositionless reason from which the historically situated interpreter could begin afresh.

Passage 9 (Questions 41–45)

Austin, Searle, and the Architecture of the Speech Act

J. L. Austin's How to Do Things with Words began with what he announced as a small but instructive observation. There exist sentences — "I name this ship the Argo," "I bequeath my library to my niece," "I promise to be there by morning" — which, when uttered in the appropriate circumstances by the appropriate speaker, do not describe a state of affairs that is independently the case but rather perform an action whose accomplishment is the very utterance. Austin called these performatives, and set them against constatives, which purport to describe a world that obtains regardless of the saying.

The early Austin held that performatives, unlike constatives, were not true or false but rather felicitous or infelicitous. To pronounce a marriage in the absence of the requisite authority is not, on this analysis, to assert something false; it is to fail to do what one purported to do. The conditions of felicity — the right speaker, the right setting, the right uptake by the relevant audience — were, on the early account, the proper object of a theory of performative speech, and the most consequential of Austin's departures from the constative-centred tradition that preceded him.

The later Austin, and the Searle who took up his project, came to suspect that the dichotomy had been too neatly drawn. Constatives, on closer inspection, were also subject to felicity conditions of their own; performatives, in their turn, could be assessed for the worldly state they purported to bring about. What survived the collapse of the original opposition was the more general taxonomy that has since organised the field: the locutionary act (the bare saying), the illocutionary act (what is done in the saying), and the perlocutionary act (what is, by the saying, brought about). The neat opposition gave way; the architecture it had occasioned remained.

41. The author's reconstruction of Austin's initial position is best captured by which of the following?

(A) Constative utterances, on closer inspection, can always be reduced to a determinate set of performative commitments undertaken by the speaker in the very act of saying what is said on the analysis offered by the principal commentators.

(B) All utterances of a sufficiently formal kind, when issued in a sufficiently ritualised setting, are on Austin's analysis true or false in just the way that ordinary constative descriptions of the world are.
(C) There exist utterances which, made in appropriate circumstances by an appropriate speaker, do not describe an independent state of affairs but themselves perform the action whose accomplishment is the very utterance.
(D) Performative utterances are, in the relevant cases, simply infelicitous descriptions of the world whose principal philosophical interest lies in their characteristic failure to refer to anything.

42. The author's appeal to the example "I name this ship the Argo" is intended to illustrate that:

(A) The truth-value of an utterance can, in suitably designed cases, be settled by appeal to the official capacity of the speaker rather than to any independent worldly fact about the matter.
(B) Naming ceremonies are, despite their evident social importance, the only context in which the performative-constative distinction can be straightforwardly and unambiguously applied without philosophical residue.
(C) Maritime nomenclature constitutes, on Austin's account, a body of conventionally established custom whose careful study reveals structural features common to every variety of human speech.
(D) An utterance, made in the appropriate circumstances by the appropriate person, can itself constitute the doing of an action rather than the describing of a state of affairs that already independently obtains.

43. The author identifies all of the following as features of the later Austin's position EXCEPT:

(A) The development of a more general three-part taxonomy comprising the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act.
(B) The recognition that constative utterances, no less than performative ones, are properly subject to conditions of felicity of the kind originally identified for performatives.
(C) The thesis that the performative-constative distinction is, in its original form, a stable and exhaustive dichotomy that any adequate general theory of speech is bound to preserve.
(D) The acknowledgement that performative utterances can, in certain respects, be assessed for the worldly state they purport to bring about by the saying.

44. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's account of why the later Austin and Searle revised the original dichotomy?

(A) Searle's later appropriation of the Austinian framework for the analysis of fiction eventually drew sharp criticism from a number of philosophers working within the Derridean tradition for the reasons set out at length elsewhere in the literature.
(B) Speakers of certain Austronesian languages were found to employ ritualised performative formulae for which there is no straightforward syntactic counterpart in standard written English.
(C) The reception of Austin's later Oxford lectures within Anglophone philosophy departments was, in the immediate post-war period, considerably warmer than Austin himself appears to have anticipated.
(D) Detailed re-examination of the canonical examples established that constative utterances never in fact admit of felicity conditions in any sense remotely parallel to those operating in the performative case.

45. The author's closing observation that "the neat opposition gave way; the architecture it had occasioned remained" is best understood as:

(A) A historical claim that Austin's published work was, in its substantive content, less original than his lecture-room reputation in mid-twentieth-century Oxford had suggested.
(B) A claim that the institutional dominance of the Austinian tradition, once established at Oxford, has proved indifferent to the theoretical objections that should in principle have unsettled it.
(C) A concession that ordinary-language philosophy as a whole, despite its initial promise, has been unable to deliver an account of speech that withstands serious philosophical pressure.
(D) A claim that, although the original performative-constative dichotomy did not survive sustained scrutiny, the three-part taxonomy of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts that the dichotomy occasioned has continued to organise the field.

Passage 10 (Questions 46–50)

The Translator's Antinomy

Walter Benjamin, in the essay that has done most to shape modern thinking about translation, suggested that the translator stands before an antinomy that no practical decision can dissolve. The translator can be faithful to the meaning of the source, or faithful to its manner; in the general case she cannot, on Benjamin's account, be wholly faithful to both. To honour the meaning is, characteristically, to reach for the most natural construction the receiving language affords, and so to surrender precisely the strangeness that distinguished the original from the ordinary speech of its own readers. To honour the manner is to preserve that strangeness, at the cost of a prose that the receiving readership will find, in proportion to the translator's success, awkward and resistant.

The antinomy is not merely an aesthetic one. It is, on Benjamin's analysis, an antinomy of two competing pictures of what a translation is for. On the first picture, the translation is a service to the receiving readership: its job is to deliver, in a form they can readily consume, the content of a work that would

otherwise remain inaccessible. On the second, the translation is a service to the source work itself: its job is to enlarge the receiving language with the otherwise unavailable resources of the source, even if the enlargement is felt, at first, as a foreignness within the receiving prose.

Which of these pictures should prevail in a given case is, Benjamin maintained, not the kind of question that admits of a general answer. It depends on the relation between the two languages, on the kind of work being translated, on the readership for whom the translation is intended, and on the translator's own assessment of what each language can presently bear. The translator who pretends that this is an exclusively technical question has, by that very pretence, taken a substantive side in a debate she has refused to acknowledge.

46. The antinomy that Benjamin identifies, as the author reconstructs his position, is between:

(A) Fidelity to the original language's grammatical structures and fidelity to its phonological structures, which the author argues are seldom jointly preservable in any translation.

(B) Fidelity to the source author's stated intentions, on the one hand, and fidelity to the conventions of the genre in which the source work was written, on the other.

(C) Fidelity to the meaning of the source, which inclines towards natural construction in the receiving language, and fidelity to its manner, which preserves the source's strangeness at the cost of natural prose.

(D) Fidelity to the literal meaning of individual sentences in the source and fidelity to the overall argumentative or narrative structure of the work as a whole as the relevant cases have, on the whole, been read in the relevant scholarly literature on the subject.

47. The two pictures of "what a translation is for" that the author draws from Benjamin are best characterised as:

(A) A service to the receiving readership in delivering accessible content versus a service to the source work in enlarging the receiving language with the source's resources.

(B) A purely commercial enterprise governed by market demand versus a purely scholarly enterprise governed by philological precision and academic convention.

(C) A service to the original author's reputation in the receiving culture versus a service to the receiving culture's image of itself as a hospitable destination for foreign work.

(D) A service to the receiving state's official linguistic policy versus a service to the language communities whose interests the policy has historically not served.

48. Which of the following is identified by the author as a factor on which the resolution of the antinomy in any given case depends?

(A) The relative size of the present-day readership in the source language and the receiving language at the moment of the translation's publication.

(B) The relation between the two languages, the kind of work being translated, and the readership for whom the translation is intended.

(C) The recommendations issued by the international professional associations of translators in their guidelines for the conduct of the relevant kind of work.

(D) The personal acquaintance that the translator may or may not have with the living author of the source work, where the source author is still alive.

49. The author's closing remark about the translator who treats translation as "an exclusively technical question" is best understood as the claim that:

(A) Translators have, in general, the appropriate technical training to resolve the antinomy without further philosophical reflection in most cases.

(B) The pretence of technicality is itself a substantive side-taking in a debate the translator has refused to acknowledge.

(C) The translator who treats translation technically has, by that posture, displayed a properly modest understanding of the limits of theoretical reflection in this area.

(D) Translation studies as a discipline has succeeded, in recent decades, in placing translation on a sufficiently rigorous footing to make the antinomy a merely historical concern.

50. Which of the following positions is LEAST consistent with the view the author attributes to Benjamin in the passage?

(A) A translator who insists that the choice of strategy is purely technical has, by that very insistence, taken a position on a question she has declined to argue for openly.

(B) A translation that surrenders too much of the source's strangeness loses precisely what distinguished the original from the ordinary speech of its own readers in the source culture.

(C) Different kinds of source work, addressed to different receiving readerships, may reasonably call for very different resolutions of the antinomy between fidelity to meaning and to manner.

(D) There exists, in principle, a uniform set of rules of translation that, if competently applied, will determine the correct decision between fidelity to meaning and fidelity to manner for any case that may arise.

Passage 11 (Questions 51–55)

Basic Structure and the Limits of Constitutional Amendment

Among the more remarkable features of post-colonial comparative constitutionalism is the spread, from its first articulation by the Indian Supreme Court in 1973, of the doctrine that certain features of a written constitution lie beyond the reach of its own amendment procedures. The doctrine — known in its Indian articulation as the "basic structure" doctrine — has since been received, with significant local variation, in jurisdictions as diverse as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kenya, Colombia and, most recently and most controversially, the Federal Republic of Germany in a series of constitutional-court decisions on European integration.

The doctrine is open to a familiar objection. A constitution is, on the orthodox account, the considered work of a constituent power; its amendment procedure is the orderly route by which that power's successors may revise it; and to hold that a written amendment procedure cannot be used to revise certain features of the text is to claim, against the text itself, that the constituent power is not finally sovereign over its own constitution. The objection has force, and the doctrine's defenders have been driven to a more subtle position. They have argued that the doctrine does not deny the sovereignty of the constituent power; it denies, rather, that the ordinary amendment procedure exhausts the modes in which that power may act. The basic structure may be revised, but not by amendment; it requires, on this view, a constituent act of a different and more demanding kind.

Whether the more subtle position is wholly successful is a matter on which serious comparative scholarship continues to divide. What is not in dispute is that the doctrine has, in jurisdiction after jurisdiction, supplied a defeasible barrier against constitutional change of the kind that might otherwise dismantle the constitutional order itself. Whether such a barrier should be supplied by judges, by political process, or by no one at all is a question to which the comparative record does not yet return a settled answer.

51. The basic structure doctrine, as the author presents it, holds that:

(A) A written constitution may be revised in its entirety by judicial decision, where the judges concerned are persuaded that the existing text has become substantially obsolete.

(B) The amendment procedure of a written constitution may, on suitable occasion, be replaced by an ordinary act of the elected legislature acting alone.

(C) Certain features of a written constitution lie beyond the reach of the constitution's own amendment procedures.

(D) The constituent power that drafted a written constitution retains the formal authority to repudiate the entire document at any subsequent moment without further procedure.

52. The familiar objection to the doctrine, as the author reconstructs it, turns on the claim that:

(A) Judges who apply the doctrine inevitably impose, under the guise of constitutional interpretation, their own substantive policy preferences on the populations they serve.

(B) To hold that a written amendment procedure cannot be used to revise certain features of the text is to deny that the constituent power is finally sovereign over its own constitution.

(C) The doctrine has, in the relevant jurisdictions, been articulated in language so vague as to be incapable of consistent application by any actually existing judicial body.

(D) Comparative borrowing of constitutional doctrines is, in general, methodologically suspect and ought to be resisted in favour of strictly local constitutional reasoning as that account has been refined in subsequent commentary.

53. The "more subtle position" to which defenders of the doctrine have been driven, in the author's account, is the position that:

(A) The doctrine should be understood as a guideline for political deliberation rather than as a binding legal rule enforceable through ordinary judicial process.

(B) The doctrine, while perhaps difficult to reconcile with constitutional theory, can be defended on purely pragmatic grounds in the relevant local conditions.

(C) The doctrine does not deny the sovereignty of the constituent power but denies that the ordinary amendment procedure exhausts the modes in which that power may act.

(D) The basic structure of a constitution is, on careful inspection, exhausted by the rights provisions of the document and does not extend to its institutional architecture.

54. Which of the following is identified by the passage as a jurisdiction in which a version of the doctrine has been received?

(A) The Republic of France, in a series of decisions of the Conseil constitutionnel on the relationship between domestic and European law.

(B) The Federal Republic of Germany, in a series of constitutional-court decisions on European integration.

(C) The United States of America, in a sequence of Supreme Court decisions arising from challenges to federal constitutional amendments.

(D) The Russian Federation, in the work of its Constitutional Court in the period immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

55. The author's overall posture towards the question whether such a barrier should be supplied by judges is best described as:

(A) Open and unresolved, observing that the comparative record does not yet return a settled answer to the question.
(B) Firmly hostile, treating any such barrier as an indefensible usurpation of the constituent power by the judiciary.
(C) Firmly supportive, treating such a barrier as an indispensable feature of any genuinely constitutional order properly so called.
(D) Indifferent, treating the question as belonging to a level of theoretical abstraction at which no concrete decision is possible.

Passage 12 (Questions 56–60)

The Annales School and the Long Duration

For most of its institutional history, academic history has been, in Fernand Braudel's exasperated description, the history of events: of battles fought and lost, of treaties signed, of accessions and depositions, of the comings and goings of the named individuals to whom the documentary record so disproportionately attends. The reorientation associated with the Annales school, of which Braudel was the most consequential second-generation figure, set out to displace this preoccupation by a sustained attention to the slower rhythms that the eventful surface had concealed.

Three levels of historical time, on Braudel's well-known scheme, can usefully be distinguished. At the surface lies the time of events — battles, deaths, scandals — which moves quickly and which the conventional historical sources record in detail. Beneath it lies the time of conjunctures, the medium-duration cycles of prices, wages, demographic expansion and decline, that move at the pace of decades and generations. Beneath that lies the time of structures, the longue durée: the slow geographical, climatic and material conditions that determine, over centuries, what is and is not historically possible in a given region. The historian, on Braudel's view, who attends only to the eventful surface has, however carefully she works, missed most of the explanatory action.

The scheme has been criticised, even by sympathetic readers, on several counts. The clean separation of the three levels has been said to be more an analytic convenience than a feature of any real historical process. The longue durée has been said to be, in practice, so slow as to verge on the timeless and so to forfeit much of its explanatory utility. The relegation of human agency to the surface has been said to misdescribe the structuring role of action in long-run change. The scheme remains, even so, the most influential single framework for thinking about historical time produced in the twentieth century.

56. The author identifies which of the following as the time of conjunctures in Braudel's scheme?

(A) The rapidly moving sequence of battles, deaths, scandals and similar events that the conventional historical sources record in detail.
(B) The slow geographical, climatic and material conditions that determine what is and is not historically possible over centuries within a given region.
(C) The medium-duration cycles of prices, wages, demographic expansion and decline, that move at the pace of decades and generations.
(D) The succession of accessions and depositions of named political leaders to which much of the older documentary record so disproportionately attended.

57. The principal criticism of Braudel's scheme that the author flags as having been advanced even by sympathetic readers is that:

(A) The clean separation of the three levels is more an analytic convenience than a feature of any real historical process.
(B) The framework was, in its original conception, too tightly tied to the geographical conditions of the Mediterranean to be of any use elsewhere.
(C) The framework has been comprehensively superseded by later quantitative methods that render its qualitative apparatus largely otiose.
(D) The framework's emphasis on long-duration analysis cannot, in practice, be reconciled with the demands of any responsible empirical historical writing.

58. The author characterises the older tradition that the Annales school set out to displace as one whose central preoccupation was:

(A) The intellectual history of European philosophical schools and their reception by the cultivated reading publics of the major continental capitals.
(B) The systematic comparative study of state institutions and their evolution across substantial periods of European political history.
(C) The sustained empirical reconstruction of the everyday lives of ordinary people in the centuries before the rise of the modern documentary state.
(D) The history of events: battles, treaties, accessions, depositions, and the comings and goings of the named individuals to whom the documentary record disproportionately attended.

59. Which of the following, if established, would most STRENGTHEN the criticism that the longue durée verges, in practice, on the timeless?

(A) Detailed archival evidence that Braudel himself, in his unpublished correspondence, expressed serious reservations about the explanatory utility of the longue durée category as he had defined it.
(B) Empirical work showing that the variables Braudel assigned to the longue durée — geography, climate, basic material conditions — have, in well-studied regions, exhibited essentially no measurable variation across the periods to which the scheme has been applied.
(C) Comparative scholarship indicating that the three-level scheme has been applied with more success in non-European historiography than in the European traditions for which it was originally devised.
(D) The observation that the longue durée has, in recent decades, become a less prominent category in the writing of the third-generation Annales historians than it was in Braudel's own work on the dominant reading of the contemporary secondary sources for reasons that have been the subject of substantial discussion.

60. The author's overall assessment of Braudel's scheme, as it emerges from the passage as a whole, is best described as:

(A) Strictly dismissive: presenting the scheme as a curiosity of mid-twentieth-century French historiography whose explanatory limitations have made it of merely antiquarian interest.
(B) Wholly endorsing: presenting the scheme as substantially free of significant difficulties and as adequately defended against the criticisms that the author records in passing.
(C) Critical but respectful: rehearsing serious objections to the scheme while acknowledging that it remains the most influential single framework for thinking about historical time produced in the twentieth century.
(D) Studiously neutral: declining either to acknowledge the scheme's influence or to register the substantive objections that critical readers have brought against it.

Passage 13 (Questions 61–65)

The Standard of Proof and the Asymmetry of Error

Anglo-American legal systems have, by long convention, distinguished sharply between the standard of proof required in criminal proceedings — proof beyond reasonable doubt — and that required in civil proceedings, where the balance of probabilities ordinarily suffices. The doctrinal language is familiar to every student of evidence; its theoretical justification is less straightforward than the familiar language suggests, and has occupied legal epistemologists in earnest only in the last few decades.

The standard justification is asymmetric. The two kinds of error in adjudication — convicting the innocent and acquitting the guilty — are not, on this account, equally costly. Convicting an innocent person inflicts a punishment that the criminal law itself recognises as among the gravest interferences a state may impose on a citizen; acquitting a guilty person leaves the criminal at liberty but does not itself add any new injury to the original victim. If the two errors are weighted unequally, the rational standard of proof shifts away from the indifference point at which the two are equally probable and towards a more demanding requirement that errs, where it must err, on the side of acquittal. The civil case, on the standard account, presents no comparable asymmetry: the plaintiff and the defendant face, in the ordinary case, comparable harms in the event of an erroneous decision against them, and the rational standard sits at the indifference point.

The standard account has been challenged from two directions. Some have argued that the asymmetry between criminal errors is exaggerated, in particular where the offence is serious and the social cost of leaving a perpetrator at liberty is correspondingly high. Others have argued that civil cases, properly examined, exhibit asymmetries of their own — between corporate plaintiff and individual defendant, for example — that the indifference standard culpably fails to register. The defenders of the orthodox position have, in turn, accepted that some refinement is needed without conceding the principle.

61. The standard justification for the asymmetric standards of proof, as the author summarises it, rests on the claim that:

(A) The criminal courts are, by long institutional tradition, less competent than the civil courts in the assessment of factual evidence and therefore require a more demanding standard of proof to compensate for the deficiency.
(B) The two kinds of error in criminal adjudication — convicting the innocent and acquitting the guilty — are not equally costly, and the rational standard of proof shifts towards a requirement that errs on the side of acquittal.
(C) The civil courts deal exclusively with disputes between private parties of comparable resources whereas the criminal courts deal with disputes between the state and the citizen in the ordinary technical sense of the expression as the relevant authorities have repeatedly affirmed.
(D) The historical origins of the two standards lie in distinct procedural traditions whose differences are now too deeply embedded in legal practice to be unwound by any theoretical argument.

62. The author identifies which of the following as the conventional standard in civil proceedings within Anglo-American legal systems?

(A) Proof on the balance of probabilities.
(B) Proof beyond all conceivable doubt.
(C) Proof to a moral certainty.
(D) Proof beyond reasonable doubt.

63. The first of the two challenges to the standard account, as the passage presents it, is that:

(A) The two kinds of error in criminal adjudication are, on careful inspection, indistinguishable in their downstream effects on the public's willingness to comply with the criminal law.
(B) The standard account has been derived, on close inspection, from a theory of moral cost that does not survive comparison with the cost-functions used in adjacent areas of public economics.
(C) The asymmetry between criminal errors is, in practice, applied with a consistency that the more philosophical defenders of the standard would, on reflection, find embarrassing.
(D) The asymmetry between criminal errors is exaggerated, particularly where the offence is serious and the social cost of leaving a perpetrator at liberty is correspondingly high.

64. The author observes that defenders of the orthodox position have responded to the two challenges by:

(A) Insisting that no concession of any kind is required and that the orthodox position can be maintained without modification in the face of the challenges as they have been advanced.
(B) Abandoning the asymmetric standard in favour of a unified standard of proof to be applied across both criminal and civil proceedings without distinction.
(C) Conceding the second challenge in full while resisting the first, and so reworking the asymmetric standard into a position that the relevant critics have themselves substantially endorsed.
(D) Accepting that some refinement is needed without conceding the principle.

65. Which of the following, if established, would most STRENGTHEN the second of the two challenges to the standard account?

(A) Historical evidence that the balance-of-probabilities standard was, in the earliest period of its operation, applied with a degree of inconsistency that more recent procedural reform has substantially addressed.
(B) Empirical evidence that, in civil disputes between corporate plaintiffs and individual defendants, the indifference standard systematically produces outcomes whose error costs are very unevenly distributed between the parties.
(C) Comparative evidence that Continental European systems, which do not formally distinguish the standards in the Anglo-American manner, none the less arrive at outcomes broadly comparable to those of the Anglo-American courts.
(D) Survey evidence indicating that most practising civil litigators describe themselves as broadly satisfied with the operation of the present civil standard of proof in their jurisdictions in the standard formulation employed by the discipline.

Passage 14 (Questions 66–70)

Intention, Foresight, and the Doctrine of Double Effect

Anscombe's question — what makes an action intentional under one description and merely foreseen under another — has generated, in the philosophy of action of the last sixty years, a literature out of all proportion to its initial unobtrusiveness. The reason the question matters is that an enormous range of moral and legal judgements turn on the distinction it asks us to draw. The doctrine of double effect, in particular, permits, under specified conditions, the production of a foreseen but unintended harm in pursuit of a proportionate good; the same action, under a description that makes the harm part of what is intended, falls outside the doctrine's protection.

The paradigm cases are familiar. The surgeon who administers a high dose of palliative morphine to relieve a dying patient's pain foresees, but does not intend, the modest hastening of death that the dose will produce. The terror bomber who destroys a city to break enemy morale intends, by the same action, the civilian deaths that constitute the morale-breaking effect. Between these clear cases lies a substantial range of harder ones, in which the intention-foresight distinction has been said by critics to do less work than its defenders suppose.

The principal critical line is that the distinction, while perhaps psychologically real, is morally inert in the cases in which we are inclined to invoke it. The surgeon who foresees the hastening of death and the surgeon who, for some hidden reason, additionally desires it are, on this view, in the same moral position; the bomber whose terror is part of the means and the bomber whose terror is a foreseen consequence of a strategic objective are, on the same view, in moral positions that differ less than the doctrine suggests. The defender's reply is that the distinction tracks something morally real even where it is hard to see — something about how the agent treats the affected party — and that the hard cases are hard precisely because they involve refinements of a distinction that nevertheless does substantive moral work.

66. The doctrine of double effect, as the author summarises it, permits:

(A) The production of harm only where the affected party has expressly consented to the action that will bring about the harm.
(B) The deliberate production of any harm whatever, provided that the agent can credibly maintain that some good was simultaneously achieved by the same action.
(C) The production of a foreseen but unintended harm in pursuit of a proportionate good, under specified conditions.
(D) The production of harm in pursuit of any good, provided that the harm and the good are of approximately equal magnitude on the agent's own assessment.

67. The author's contrast between the surgeon and the terror bomber is intended to illustrate that:

(A) Any harm produced in the course of a medical action is, by the conventions of the relevant profession, automatically taken to fall within the scope of the doctrine.
(B) Medical contexts are, in general, more amenable to the application of the doctrine of double effect than are military contexts in which large-scale harm is involved.
(C) The doctrine of double effect has been, in practice, more rigorously applied to medical decisions than to military decisions over the period in which it has been articulated.
(D) A clear case in which a harm is foreseen but not intended may be set against a clear case in which a harm is intended as the very means by which a further effect is to be produced.

68. The principal critical line against the doctrine, as the passage reconstructs it, holds that the intention-foresight distinction is:

(A) Morally substantial but psychologically unstable, since agents are rarely able to articulate clearly which of two effects they intended at the moment of action.
(B) Psychologically real but morally inert in the cases in which we are inclined to invoke it.
(C) Both psychologically and morally substantial, with the principal disputes between defenders and critics turning on issues of application rather than principle.
(D) Neither psychologically nor morally substantial, since the very notion of intention is, on a careful analysis, indistinguishable from that of foreseen consequence.

69. The defender's reply to the principal critical line, as the author states it, is that the intention-foresight distinction:

(A) Tracks something morally real even where it is hard to see — something about how the agent treats the affected party — and the hard cases are hard precisely because they involve refinements of a distinction that nevertheless does substantive moral work.
(B) Was decisively vindicated by the work of mid-twentieth-century analytic philosophers and has subsequently been free of any serious challenge in the relevant literature.
(C) Has been comprehensively reformulated in recent work in such a way as to render the principal critical line largely beside the point as a matter of substantive moral assessment.
(D) Has, in practice, been retained by judges and clinicians more on grounds of administrative convenience than on any deeper substantive moral conviction on the most natural construction of the available evidence in line with the position generally taken in the journals.

70. Which of the following claims would the author most likely regard as INCONSISTENT with the defender's position as the passage presents it?

(A) The surgeon who foresees and the surgeon who additionally desires the hastening of the patient's death are, despite the difference in their inner states, in indistinguishable moral positions.
(B) The intention-foresight distinction tracks a real feature of how the agent treats the affected party, even in cases in which the distinction is difficult to apply with confidence.
(C) The hard cases for the doctrine of double effect are hard because they involve refinements of a distinction that, none the less, does substantive moral work.
(D) The doctrine of double effect requires, for its application, that the good pursued by the action be genuinely proportionate to the harm foreseen as its side-effect.

Passage 15 (Questions 71–75)

Intrinsic Value and the Limits of Environmental Economics

The dominant framework for environmental policy over the last half-century has been one in which the values at stake are construed, with whatever sophistication, as ultimately commensurable in monetary terms. A wetland is worth its contribution to flood control, water purification, recreational use and, on the most ambitious cost-benefit calculations, a stipulated valuation of the wildlife it shelters. The framework has had considerable practical success in moving environmental considerations into deliberations from which they had previously been excluded; the price of that success has been a quiet metaphysical commitment.

The commitment is to a thesis that environmental ethicists, since the 1970s, have called the doctrine of fungibility: that the values at stake in environmental policy are, at bottom, of the same kind, and may be traded off against one another and against non-environmental values without remainder. The most influential dissent has argued that the doctrine is false. Some environmental values, on this dissenting view, are intrinsic — they belong to the entities that possess them in a way that does not depend on any further

valuation by human beings — and intrinsic values are not, in the relevant sense, fungible. The destruction of the last population of a species cannot be made good by the equivalent generation of recreational benefit elsewhere, however carefully the equivalence is calculated.

The dissenting position has had a difficult reception in the policy literature, in part because the policy apparatus is built for fungible quantities and processes them more comfortably than it does intrinsic values. It has also faced internal difficulties: critics have pressed for an account of which entities possess intrinsic value and why, and the candidate answers — sentience, biotic membership, ecological role — generate, in turn, their own boundary problems. Environmental ethics, on the dissenting side, is in the awkward position of having a powerful negative thesis whose corresponding positive theory has not yet matured.

71. The "doctrine of fungibility" that environmental ethicists since the 1970s have identified is, as the author presents it:

(A) The thesis that environmental policy should be exclusively determined by appeal to the intrinsic value of the entities concerned, without reference to instrumental considerations.
(B) The thesis that environmental and non-environmental values are radically incommensurable and that no rational trade-off between them is, in principle, possible under the framework that the passage itself adopts.
(C) The thesis that the values at stake in environmental policy are at bottom of the same kind and may be traded off against one another and against non-environmental values without remainder.
(D) The thesis that monetary valuation of environmental goods is, in practice, more reliable than the various non-monetary methods of valuation that have been proposed in the literature.

72. The most influential dissent against the doctrine, as summarised by the author, holds that:

(A) All environmental values are intrinsic and the entire apparatus of cost-benefit analysis is, on careful inspection, philosophically incoherent in its application to environmental questions.
(B) Some environmental values are intrinsic — they belong to the entities that possess them in a way that does not depend on any further valuation by human beings — and intrinsic values are not, in the relevant sense, fungible.
(C) Intrinsic values can be assigned reliable monetary equivalents, provided that the relevant valuation methods are administered with sufficient methodological care by trained personnel.
(D) The distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value is, on closer inspection, a verbal artefact that the dissenting tradition has been unable to give substantive content to.

73. The author identifies all of the following as candidate criteria for the possession of intrinsic value canvassed by the dissenting position EXCEPT:

(A) Aesthetic appeal to a representative human observer.
(B) Sentience as that proposition is conventionally understood on the version of the doctrine most often defended.
(C) Biotic membership.
(D) Ecological role.

74. The author's overall characterisation of the dissenting position in environmental ethics is best described as:

(A) A position whose negative thesis is largely correct and whose positive theory is, on the available evidence, in essentially its final mature form.
(B) A position whose negative thesis has been comprehensively refuted by the more recent work in environmental economics and whose positive content is therefore of merely historical interest.
(C) A position with a powerful negative thesis whose corresponding positive theory has not yet matured.
(D) A position too internally confused to be assessed and best treated by responsible policy actors as a regrettable distraction from the serious business of environmental decision-making.

75. With which of the following claims would the author most likely AGREE on the evidence of the passage?

(A) The dissenting position in environmental ethics has produced a fully matured positive theory of intrinsic value that the policy apparatus has so far simply refused to take seriously.
(B) Cost-benefit analysis, as it is currently practised by environmental economists, has been comprehensively shown to rest on the doctrine of fungibility in a form indistinguishable from the one the dissenting tradition rejects.
(C) The dominant framework for environmental policy has, on careful inspection, made essentially no practical contribution to moving environmental considerations into deliberations from which they had previously been excluded.
(D) The destruction of the last population of a species cannot, on the dissenting view, be made good by the equivalent generation of recreational benefit elsewhere, however carefully the equivalence is calculated.

Passage 16 (Questions 76–80)

Platonism, Nominalism, and the Indispensability of Mathematics

The question whether mathematical objects exist is, in the eyes of working mathematicians, the kind of question that ought to admit of a brisk answer. The eyes of working mathematicians are not, however, the eyes in which the question has been most carefully examined. Among philosophers of mathematics, the question has, since the middle of the last century, divided the field between two broad positions: a Platonism that takes mathematical objects to be real, abstract entities to which the propositions of mathematics genuinely refer, and a nominalism that denies the existence of any such abstract objects and seeks to reinterpret mathematical discourse accordingly.

The most influential argument for Platonism is sometimes called the indispensability argument and is associated with Quine and Putnam. It runs, in outline, as follows. Our best scientific theories of the physical world quantify over mathematical objects: they presuppose the existence of numbers, functions and sets in the formulation of their laws. We have, the argument continues, the same kind of reason to believe in the existence of mathematical objects as we have to believe in the existence of electrons or genes — namely, that the theories that work invoke them. If we are realists about the unobservables of physics, we ought, by parity of reasoning, to be realists about the abstract objects of mathematics.

The nominalist reply has taken two main forms. One form, associated with Hartry Field, has been to argue that the indispensability premise is false: that mathematical talk in physical theory is dispensable, in the sense that the relevant scientific content can in principle be formulated without it. The other has been to concede the indispensability premise but to deny that it carries the ontological weight Quine and Putnam load onto it. The argument over which reply is the more promising is open, and it is one in which the working mathematician, if she chooses to engage at all, is unlikely to find the brisk answer her ordinary practice had led her to expect.

76. Platonism in the philosophy of mathematics, as the author defines it, is the position that:

(A) Mathematical objects are real, abstract entities to which the propositions of mathematics genuinely refer.

(B) Mathematical discourse should, on careful analysis, be reinterpreted in such a way that no abstract entity is genuinely presupposed by any of its propositions.

(C) Mathematics is, in its entirety, a useful fiction that performs valuable work in scientific theory without committing its users to any associated ontology.

(D) Mathematical objects exist only in the minds of mathematicians and possess no genuine reality independent of the cognitive acts by which they are entertained.

77. The indispensability argument, in the form the author attributes to Quine and Putnam, proceeds from the premise that:

(A) The propositions of pure mathematics can, on careful inspection, be established by a priori reasoning whose conclusions are independent of any empirical commitments.

(B) Our best scientific theories of the physical world quantify over mathematical objects: they presuppose the existence of numbers, functions and sets in the formulation of their laws.

(C) The historical record of scientific success establishes that mathematical reasoning is, as a practical matter, the most reliable form of theoretical inference at our disposal.

(D) Mathematical practice exhibits a degree of agreement among its practitioners that the empirical sciences have, despite their successes, not been able to match.

78. The first of the two nominalist replies, associated by the passage with Hartry Field, holds that:

(A) The indispensability premise is false: mathematical talk in physical theory is dispensable, in the sense that the relevant scientific content can in principle be formulated without it.

(B) The indispensability premise is true but does not carry the ontological weight that Quine and Putnam load onto it in their version of the argument in the conditions presupposed by the passage on the analysis offered by the principal commentators.

(C) Mathematical objects do exist but possess a mode of being so unlike that of physical objects that the comparison Quine and Putnam draw is fundamentally misleading.

(D) The realism that Quine and Putnam apply to the unobservables of physics is itself, on careful examination, indefensible, and the corresponding argument therefore lapses.

79. Which of the following, if established, would most WEAKEN the indispensability argument as the passage presents it?

(A) A successful demonstration that our best scientific theories of the physical world can, in principle, be reformulated in a way that neither quantifies over nor otherwise presupposes the existence of mathematical objects.

(B) A growing professional consensus among working mathematicians that the philosophical question of the existence of mathematical objects is of no interest to the conduct of ordinary mathematical practice.

(C) Detailed evidence that Quine and Putnam, in their late correspondence, came to express significant private reservations about the form of the argument they had earlier defended in print.

(D) The widespread observation that mathematical practice continues, in any case, irrespective of the answers that philosophers of mathematics may eventually give to the questions they have set themselves.

80. The author's closing observation that the question is one in which the working mathematician "is unlikely to find the brisk answer her ordinary practice had led her to expect" is best understood as:

(A) A concession that the question of the existence of mathematical objects has, after long debate, finally received a definitive answer that the working mathematician would readily endorse.
(B) A polemical claim that working mathematicians are, in general, intellectually unequipped to engage with the philosophical questions that arise about their own discipline for the reasons set out at length elsewhere in the literature.
(C) An optimistic forecast that the debate between Platonists and nominalists is, on the available evidence, likely to be conclusively resolved within the foreseeable academic future.
(D) A gentle suggestion that the philosophical question, on careful inspection, lacks the kind of clean resolution that the working mathematician's habits of thought might naturally lead her to anticipate.

SECTION II — CURRENT AFFAIRS & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Directions: Read each passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. Each passage is followed by five questions based on its content.

Passage 1 (Questions 81–85)

Sub-classification within Scheduled Castes and the Davinder Singh Aftermath

On 4 May 2026, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivered judgment in a batch of writ petitions arising out of legislation enacted by three States in the wake of State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh (August 2024). In Davinder Singh, a seven-judge bench had overruled the earlier holding in E.V. Chinnaiah v. State of Andhra Pradesh (2005) and had held that Scheduled Castes do not constitute a homogeneous class for the purposes of Article 341, and that the States are constitutionally permitted to sub-classify within the Scheduled Caste list in order to extend the benefit of reservation to the more disadvantaged groups within it.

The present petitions challenged the manner in which three State enactments had operationalised that permission. The petitioners' principal contention was that the State legislation, while purporting to identify the relatively disadvantaged sub-groups, had in substance effected a deletion of certain communities from the Scheduled Caste list in respect of the State's own quota — a step that, on the petitioners' argument, only Parliament can take under Article 341(2). The States argued, by contrast, that they had merely allocated the existing quota among the groups within the Scheduled Caste list, without disturbing the list itself.

The bench, by a majority of 4-1, declined to strike down any of the impugned enactments, holding that the constitutional limit on sub-classification lies not in the act of allocation itself but in the empirical adequacy of the data on which the allocation rests. The majority confirmed that sub-classification must satisfy what it described as a "twin test" — there must be a rational principle for the sub-grouping, and the rational principle must, in turn, be supported by quantifiable and contemporaneous data on relative backwardness. Two of the three impugned enactments were upheld on the materials placed before the court; the third was remitted to the relevant High Court for fresh consideration of the underlying empirical record.

81. Which of the following correctly states the holding in State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh (August 2024), as the passage describes it?

(A) Scheduled Castes constitute a homogeneous class for the purposes of Article 341, and any sub-classification within the list is impermissible save by parliamentary law made under Article 341(2).
(B) Scheduled Castes do not constitute a homogeneous class for the purposes of Article 341, and the States are constitutionally permitted to sub-classify within the Scheduled Caste list to extend reservation to the more disadvantaged groups within it.
(C) The States are competent to sub-classify within the Scheduled Caste list only with the prior concurrence of the President of India under the proviso to Article 341(1).
(D) The States are competent to sub-classify within the Scheduled Caste list only in respect of reservations in education, and not in respect of reservations in public employment.

82. The petitioners' principal contention against the three State enactments, as the passage summarises it, was that the legislation had:

(A) Failed to obtain the prior recommendation of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, a step required under Article 338 before any State legislation on the subject can be validly enacted.
(B) Operated retrospectively to the disadvantage of candidates who had, on the strength of the unsubclassified list, already accrued rights under the State's reservation regime.
(C) In substance effected a deletion of certain communities from the Scheduled Caste list in respect of the State's own quota, a step that only Parliament can take under Article 341(2).
(D) Violated the doctrine of pleasure under which appointments made under the unsubclassified list could not, on any view, be disturbed by subsequent legislative action.

83. The "twin test" articulated by the majority in the present judgment, as the passage describes it, requires that:

(A) There be parliamentary approval for the sub-grouping, and that the sub-grouping be supported by a finding of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes recorded after a public hearing.
(B) There be a rational principle for the sub-grouping, and that the State has obtained the prior concurrence of every other State whose Scheduled Caste list contains any of the affected communities.
(C) There be a rational principle for the sub-grouping, and that the rational principle be supported by quantifiable and contemporaneous data on relative backwardness.
(D) There be quantifiable and contemporaneous data on relative backwardness, and that the sub-grouping leave the aggregate Scheduled Caste quota in the State at not less than fifteen per cent of the relevant cadre strength.

84. Suppose, in a future case, a State legislature were to enact a sub-classification within the Scheduled Caste list on the basis of a State commission report dating from 2008, no more recent data being placed before the court. On the present judgment's reasoning, the most likely consequence would be that:

(A) The sub-classification would be referred to the President of India under Article 341(1) for fresh consideration, the court having no further jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter on the merits.
(B) The sub-classification would be upheld, since the twin test is satisfied by the existence of any official report, irrespective of its date, on relative backwardness among the affected communities.
(C) The sub-classification would be struck down as falling within Article 341(2), the staleness of the data being treated as evidence of a substantive deletion of communities from the Scheduled Caste list.
(D) The sub-classification would fail the second limb of the twin test for want of contemporaneous data on relative backwardness, notwithstanding the rationality of the principle of sub-grouping itself.

85. The decision of the bench in respect of the third of the three impugned enactments, as the passage describes it, was to:

(A) Remit the matter to the relevant High Court for fresh consideration of the underlying empirical record.
(B) Strike down the enactment in its entirety as ultra vires Article 341(2) of the Constitution.
(C) Stay the operation of the enactment pending the production of fresh empirical materials by the State Government.
(D) Refer the matter to a larger bench for reconsideration of the doctrine laid down in Davinder Singh itself.

Passage 2 (Questions 86–90)

The May 2026 MPC Dissent and the Architecture of Inflation Targeting

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India, in its bi-monthly meeting concluded on 8 May 2026, voted by a majority of 4-2 to retain the policy repo rate at its prevailing level and to maintain the stance described as "withdrawal of accommodation". The two dissenting members, both external appointees, recorded separate notes proposing a twenty-five basis-point reduction on the ground that the headline inflation print had remained within the lower half of the tolerance band for six consecutive months and that the output gap had widened since the previous meeting.

The statutory architecture is provided by the amended Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, read with Section 45ZA, which empowers the Central Government, in consultation with the Reserve Bank, to determine the inflation target. The current target, retained by notification of 31 March 2026 for a further period of five years, is consumer price inflation of four per cent with a tolerance band of plus-or-minus two percentage points. Section 45ZN provides that, if the Bank fails to meet the inflation target for three consecutive quarters, it shall set out, in a report to the Central Government, the reasons for the failure, the remedial actions proposed, and an estimate of the time within which the target will again be met.

The two dissents draw attention to a feature of the framework that has been the subject of growing academic comment. The statutory mandate operates symmetrically — failure is defined as inflation being either above or below the tolerance band for three consecutive quarters — but the institutional practice has tended to treat upside misses with greater seriousness than downside misses. Whether this asymmetry is a permissible exercise of the Bank's discretion under Section 45Z, or whether it sits in tension with the statutory architecture as Parliament has now enacted it, is the question the present dissents have placed in renewed public discussion.

86. The Monetary Policy Committee's decision on 8 May 2026, as the passage describes it, was to:

(A) Raise the policy repo rate by twenty-five basis points, with two members dissenting in favour of retention of the prevailing rate.
(B) Reduce the policy repo rate by twenty-five basis points, with two members dissenting in favour of retention as the relevant cases have, on the whole, been read in the relevant scholarly literature on the subject.
(C) Retain the policy repo rate but alter the stance from "withdrawal of accommodation" to "neutral", with no member dissenting.

(D) Retain the policy repo rate and maintain the stance described as "withdrawal of accommodation", with two members dissenting in favour of a twenty-five basis-point reduction.

87. The current inflation target retained by notification of 31 March 2026, as the passage states it, is:

(A) Core consumer price inflation of four per cent with no tolerance band, the band being applicable only to the headline measure.
(B) Wholesale price inflation of four per cent with a tolerance band of plus-or-minus one percentage point.
(C) Consumer price inflation of two per cent with a tolerance band of plus-or-minus two percentage points.
(D) Consumer price inflation of four per cent with a tolerance band of plus-or-minus two percentage points.

88. Section 45ZN of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, as the passage describes it, is engaged on the failure of the Bank to meet the inflation target for:

(A) Three consecutive quarters.
(B) Two consecutive quarters.
(C) Four consecutive quarters.
(D) Six consecutive months, irrespective of how the months fall across quarters.

89. Which of the following best captures the feature of the inflation-targeting framework on which the two dissents draw attention, as the passage presents it?

(A) The statutory mandate empowers the Bank to alter the inflation target unilaterally, subject only to a subsequent report to the Central Government on the reasons for the alteration.
(B) The statutory mandate operates asymmetrically in favour of upside misses, but the institutional practice has, in recent years, sought to apply both limbs with equal seriousness.
(C) The statutory mandate operates symmetrically as between upside and downside misses, but the institutional practice has tended to treat upside misses with greater seriousness.
(D) The statutory mandate confers on the external members of the Monetary Policy Committee a casting vote in any case in which the internal members are equally divided.

90. Suppose the headline inflation print, having remained within the lower half of the tolerance band for six consecutive months as the dissents note, were now to fall below the lower limit of the band and remain there for three consecutive quarters. On the statutory architecture the passage describes, the most direct consequence would be that:

(A) The Monetary Policy Committee would, by operation of the statute, be required to reduce the policy repo rate by a margin at least equal to the extent by which the inflation print has fallen below the tolerance band.
(B) The Central Government would, in consultation with the Bank, be required to revise the inflation target under Section 45ZA before any further meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee.
(C) The two external members responsible for the dissent would, by operation of the statute, be deemed to have been correct in their assessment and the majority decision retrospectively rescinded.
(D) The Bank would, under Section 45ZN, be required to set out in a report to the Central Government the reasons for the failure, the remedial actions proposed, and an estimated time for the target's recovery.

Passage 3 (Questions 91–95)

Provisional Measures, Jus Cogens, and the Genocide Convention

On 6 May 2026, the International Court of Justice issued a further order on provisional measures in a case brought by a Western African applicant State invoking Article IX of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948. The Court declined to indicate the additional measures sought by the applicant — principally, the suspension of all military operations by the respondent in the relevant territory — but ordered the respondent to permit the unimpeded supply of humanitarian assistance pending the Court's eventual decision on the merits.

The order is the third in a sequence of provisional-measures orders in the case, and the wider doctrinal interest of the present round lies less in its operative provisions than in a separate opinion by one of the judges. That separate opinion, while concurring in the dispositif, argued at length that the prohibition of genocide is a peremptory norm of general international law — a norm of jus cogens — and that the Court's discretion at the provisional-measures stage, in any case brought under the Genocide Convention, ought therefore to be exercised with a particular bias in favour of the indication of the most restrictive measures of which the case admits.

The broader doctrinal background, as the order recalls in its citation of the Barcelona Traction judgment of 1970, is the recognition of certain norms as obligations erga omnes — obligations owed to the international community as a whole — and of certain among those obligations as having the further character of jus cogens, from which no derogation is permitted and which may be modified only by a subsequent norm of the same character. Whether the further proposition advanced in the separate opinion — that the jus

cogens character of the underlying obligation operates upon the standard for the indication of provisional measures, and not merely upon the merits — is a sound development of the existing jurisprudence is the question to which the present order has drawn renewed attention.

91. Article IX of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, as employed in the case the passage describes, is the provision by which:

(A) The contracting parties undertake to enact, in accordance with their respective constitutions, the necessary legislation to give effect to the Convention.
(B) Disputes between the contracting parties relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the Convention may be referred to the International Court of Justice.
(C) The crime of genocide is defined for the purposes of the Convention as the commission of certain enumerated acts with intent to destroy a protected group as such.
(D) The contracting parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law.

92. The operative provisions of the Court's order of 6 May 2026, as the passage describes them, are best summarised as:

(A) A declination of the additional measures sought, coupled with a direction that the applicant pay the costs of the present round of proceedings.
(B) A grant of the additional measures sought, in the form of a suspension of all military operations by the respondent in the relevant territory as that account has been refined in subsequent commentary.
(C) A declination of the additional measures sought, coupled with an order requiring the respondent to permit the unimpeded supply of humanitarian assistance pending the merits decision.
(D) A grant of the additional measures sought, in modified form, with a direction that the parties report to the Court on compliance at six-monthly intervals.

93. A norm of jus cogens, as the passage characterises it, is best described as:

(A) A peremptory norm of general international law, from which no derogation is permitted and which may be modified only by a subsequent norm of the same character.
(B) A norm of general international law that imposes obligations erga omnes, that is, obligations owed to the international community as a whole.
(C) A norm of general international law that has been codified in a multilateral treaty open to the participation of all States of the international system.
(D) A norm of general international law that has been recognised as customary by the principal judicial organ of the United Nations in the exercise of its advisory jurisdiction.

94. The relationship between obligations erga omnes and norms of jus cogens, as the passage presents it on the authority of the Barcelona Traction judgment, is best stated as:

(A) Obligations erga omnes are obligations of a jus cogens character, the two expressions being interchangeable in the relevant jurisprudence.
(B) Certain norms generate obligations erga omnes, and certain among those obligations have the further character of jus cogens.
(C) Norms of jus cogens generate obligations erga omnes only as between States that are parties to the relevant multilateral treaty embodying the underlying obligation.
(D) Obligations erga omnes are owed to the international community as a whole, while norms of jus cogens are owed only to the States that have expressly consented to be bound by them.

95. Suppose the further proposition advanced in the separate opinion — that the jus cogens character of an obligation operates upon the standard for the indication of provisional measures — were to be accepted in subsequent jurisprudence. The most direct doctrinal consequence, on the passage's framing, would be that:

(A) The substantive rules of State responsibility for breach of erga omnes obligations would, in themselves, be displaced by a separate regime applicable only to jus cogens norms.
(B) The Court's jurisdiction to entertain cases under the compromissory clauses of multilateral treaties would extend to every State of the international community, irrespective of consent.
(C) The merits stage of any case turning on a jus cogens obligation would, by operation of the rule, be decided in favour of the applicant State without further consideration of the underlying facts.
(D) The Court's discretion at the provisional-measures stage in any case turning on a jus cogens obligation would be exercised with a particular bias in favour of the most restrictive measures of which the case admits.

Passage 4 (Questions 96–100)

The Mahanadi Award and the Article 131 Question

On 7 May 2026, the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal, constituted under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, published its final award on the long-standing dispute between the upper-riparian State and the lower-riparian State concerning the sharing of the Mahanadi waters. The award, running to nearly nine hundred pages, allocated the dependable yield in agreed proportions across irrigation, drinking,

industrial and ecological uses, established a permanent Mahanadi Water Management Authority, and prescribed a minimum environmental flow to be maintained at a notified downstream gauge throughout the lean season.

The immediate political reaction has focused on a separate question. The lower-riparian State, while broadly accepting the substantive allocation, has indicated that it intends to invoke the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 131 of the Constitution in respect of the upstream State's continued operation of certain barrages that, on the lower-riparian's case, were constructed in disregard of the interim directions of the Tribunal during the pendency of the proceedings.

The constitutional difficulty lies in Section 11 of the 1956 Act, which provides that no Supreme Court or other court shall have or exercise jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute that has been or may be referred to a Tribunal under the Act. The lower-riparian's argument, drawing on the decision in State of Karnataka v. State of Tamil Nadu (2018), is that Section 11 bars only the adjudication of the water dispute itself, and does not bar a separate suit in respect of conduct by the upstream State during the period of the dispute that, on the lower-riparian's case, amounted to an actionable disregard of interim arrangements made by the Tribunal. The upstream State's response is that any complaint about conduct during the pendency of the proceedings is itself part of the water dispute and, on the plain language of Section 11, falls within the bar on Supreme Court jurisdiction. The question whether the original jurisdiction is available in the present circumstances will, almost certainly, have to be decided before any substantive examination of the lower-riparian's grievance.

96. Which of the following correctly describes the principal operative provisions of the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal's award of 7 May 2026, as the passage summarises them?

(A) An interim allocation pending the conclusion of separate proceedings before a Tribunal yet to be constituted under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 on the dominant reading of the contemporary secondary sources for reasons that have been the subject of substantial discussion.

(B) An allocation of the dependable yield across uses, the establishment of a permanent Mahanadi Water Management Authority, and the prescription of a minimum environmental flow at a notified downstream gauge throughout the lean season.

(C) A direction to the upstream State to dismantle the barrages constructed during the pendency of the proceedings, the question of substantive allocation being remitted to the Supreme Court.

(D) A finding that the Tribunal was, on a careful examination of the materials, without jurisdiction to determine the dispute, which is accordingly referred back to the Central Government for fresh consideration.

97. Section 11 of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, as the passage describes it, provides that:

(A) No Supreme Court or other court shall have or exercise jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute that has been or may be referred to a Tribunal under the Act.

(B) No Supreme Court or other court shall have or exercise jurisdiction in respect of any matter on which a Tribunal under the Act has rendered its final award.

(C) Every dispute concerning the sharing of inter-State river waters shall, in the first instance, be referred to the Supreme Court under its original jurisdiction under Article 131.

(D) The original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 131 may be invoked in respect of any inter-State water dispute only with the prior concurrence of the Central Government.

98. The lower-riparian State's argument for the availability of the Supreme Court's jurisdiction under Article 131, as the passage summarises it, is that Section 11 of the 1956 Act:

(A) Is, on a careful textual reading, inapplicable to any State that did not consent to the reference of the relevant water dispute to the Tribunal in the first place.

(B) Has been impliedly repealed by the constitutional amendment of 2019, which conferred fresh jurisdiction on the Supreme Court in inter-State disputes of a federal character.

(C) Operates only in respect of disputes concerning the sharing of waters that have been allocated by a final award, and not in respect of disputes that have arisen during the pendency of proceedings before the Tribunal.

(D) Bars only the adjudication of the water dispute itself, and does not bar a separate suit in respect of conduct during the period of the dispute that amounted to an actionable disregard of interim arrangements made by the Tribunal.

99. Article 131 of the Constitution, as it figures in the passage, is best understood as the provision that:

(A) Empowers the President to refer questions of law of public importance to the Supreme Court for the Court's advisory opinion.

(B) Confers appellate jurisdiction on the Supreme Court in matters arising out of awards of inter-State water disputes tribunals.

(C) Empowers the Supreme Court to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights, and other writs for any other purpose in the ordinary technical sense of the expression.

(D) Confers original jurisdiction on the Supreme Court in disputes between the Government of India and one or more States, or between two or more States.

100. Suppose the Supreme Court were to accept the upstream State's submission that any complaint about conduct during the pendency of the proceedings is itself part of the water dispute. The most direct consequence, on the passage's framing, would be that:

(A) The lower-riparian State's suit under Article 131 would be barred by Section 11 of the 1956 Act and would not be entertained on the merits.
(B) The lower-riparian State's suit under Article 131 would be entertained, but only after the Tribunal's award had been formally notified by the Central Government under the relevant section of the 1956 Act.
(C) The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal's final award would, in itself, be rendered unenforceable until the Supreme Court had separately ruled on the lower-riparian's complaint.
(D) The Supreme Court would, by operation of the bar in Section 11, be required to refer the dispute to a fresh Tribunal constituted under a different statutory framework.

Passage 5 (Questions 101–105)

Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Sedition Question

On 8 May 2026, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court heard preliminary submissions in a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, which has, with effect from 1 July 2024, replaced the offence of sedition formerly defined in Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860. Section 124A had itself been the subject of a hold order issued by a three-judge bench in S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (May 2022), under which all pending proceedings under Section 124A had been kept in abeyance pending reconsideration of the section's constitutional validity.

The text of Section 152 departs from Section 124A in two respects. First, the actus reus is recast in language that omits the older expression "disaffection towards the Government established by law" and substitutes a formulation directed at acts that "excite or attempt to excite secession or armed rebellion or subversive activities, or encourage feelings of separatist activities, or endanger the sovereignty or unity and integrity of India". Secondly, the explanation appended to the section provides that comments expressing disapprobation of measures of the Government with a view to obtaining their alteration by lawful means, without exciting or attempting to excite any of the proscribed activities, do not constitute an offence under the section.

The petitioners contend that, notwithstanding the textual departures, Section 152 reproduces in substance the constitutional infirmities of Section 124A. In particular, they argue that the expression "subversive activities" is so open-textured that it offends the doctrine of vagueness developed in Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015), and that the section's chilling effect on protected speech under Article 19(1)(a) is not saved by any of the permissible heads of restriction enumerated in Article 19(2). The Union's response is that the omission of "disaffection" and the express protection of lawful dissent in the explanation together meet the principal constitutional objections to the older provision, and that any residual indeterminacy is, in any event, susceptible to judicial control on a case-by-case basis.

101. Which of the following correctly describes the textual departures of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 from the older Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, as the passage identifies them?

(A) The omission of any reference to the sovereignty or unity and integrity of India and the substitution of a more general protection of the established constitutional order.
(B) The omission of the requirement of an overt act and the substitution of a pure mens rea formulation requiring only the proof of seditious intent.
(C) The retention of the expression "disaffection towards the Government established by law" and the addition of a saving for acts done in the discharge of any official duty.
(D) The omission of the expression "disaffection towards the Government established by law" and the addition of an explanation protecting lawful dissent from prosecution under the section.

102. The hold order issued in S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (May 2022), as the passage describes it, kept in abeyance:

(A) All pending proceedings under any statute creating offences against the State, including the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
(B) All pending proceedings under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 pending reconsideration of the section's constitutional validity.
(C) All pending proceedings under Section 124A and Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, in view of the substantial textual overlap between the two provisions.
(D) All pending proceedings under Section 124A in which the offence was alleged to have been committed by means of speech delivered in a legislative chamber.

103. The petitioners' principal constitutional objection to Section 152, as the passage summarises it, is that the section:

(A) Departs in substance from the older Section 124A and creates a new offence of separatism on which the Supreme Court has, on no previous occasion, had the opportunity to rule.
(B) Contains an expression "subversive activities" so open-textured that it offends the doctrine of vagueness in Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015), and that its chilling effect on speech is not saved by Article 19(2).
(C) Reverses the burden of proof in respect of seditious intent and is therefore inconsistent with the protection against self-incrimination conferred by Article 20(3) of the Constitution.
(D) Confers on the Union Government an unguided discretion to grant or refuse sanction for prosecution and is therefore inconsistent with Article 14 of the Constitution as the relevant authorities have repeatedly affirmed in the standard formulation employed by the discipline.

104. The explanation appended to Section 152, as the passage describes it, provides that:

(A) Any comment expressing disapprobation of the constitutional order itself, provided it is made in the discharge of a parliamentary or legislative function, does not constitute an offence under the section.
(B) Any comment expressing disapprobation of any measure of the Government, whether or not coupled with an intention to obtain its alteration by lawful means, does not constitute an offence under the section.
(C) Comments expressing disapprobation of measures of the Government with a view to obtaining their alteration by lawful means, without exciting any of the proscribed activities, do not constitute an offence under the section.
(D) Comments expressing disapprobation of measures of the Government constitute an offence under the section only if they are accompanied by a call for the overthrow of the constitutional order by force.

105. Suppose the Supreme Court, in the present petitions, were to accept the petitioners' submission that the expression "subversive activities" in Section 152 is unconstitutionally vague. Which of the following would be the most likely doctrinal consequence, on the passage's framing?

(A) The expression would be struck down or read down to confine it to activities tending directly to the use of force, the rest of Section 152 being severable and likely to survive.
(B) Section 152 would, in its entirety, be struck down, no part of the section being severable in view of the centrality of "subversive activities" to the actus reus of the offence.
(C) Section 152 would be struck down and the offence of sedition under the older Section 124A would, by operation of the doctrine of revival, return to the statute book in its earlier form.
(D) Section 152 would be left untouched on the strength of the explanation, which the Court would treat as sufficient by itself to save the section from any objection on the ground of vagueness.

Passage 6 (Questions 106–110)

MK Ranjitsingh, the Climate Right, and the Renewables Corridor

On 6 May 2026, a Division Bench of the Supreme Court delivered judgment in an application for clarification arising out of the directions issued in MK Ranjitsingh v. Union of India (April 2024). The earlier judgment had, while addressing the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard, articulated as a discrete fundamental right the "right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change", locating that right within the combined operation of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution, and had directed the Union and the affected State Governments to take expert advice on the routing of high-tension transmission corridors in the Thar landscape.

The present application sought a reformulation of the operative directions in the light of two developments. First, the expert committee constituted under the April 2024 order had submitted its report in November 2025, identifying a corridor that, in the view of the committee, balanced the imperatives of renewable-energy evacuation against the conservation of the bird's remaining habitat. Secondly, the Union had, in March 2026, notified India's revised Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement, which projected a substantial increase in the share of non-fossil-fuel electricity by 2030 and which the Union argued could not be met without expeditious clearance of the relevant transmission infrastructure.

The Court, in its order of 6 May 2026, accepted the expert committee's identification of the corridor in substance, but issued two further directions of a more general character. First, it directed that any future application for clearance of high-tension transmission infrastructure across critical wildlife habitat shall be accompanied by an assessment of the project's contribution to the State's notified climate-mitigation pathway, the assessment to be conducted by the relevant Pollution Control Board in consultation with the wildlife authorities. Secondly, it observed, in terms that have been widely cited in the days following, that the right articulated in the April 2024 judgment operates in two directions — both as a protection against the adverse effects of inadequate climate action, and as a constitutional warrant for measures of mitigation that are themselves capable of producing local environmental impacts of their own.

106. The fundamental right articulated in MK Ranjitsingh v. Union of India (April 2024), as the passage describes it, is the right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change, located within the combined operation of:

(A) Articles 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution.
(B) Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.
(C) Articles 48A and 51A(g) of the Constitution.
(D) Articles 21 and 32 of the Constitution.

107. The two developments in the light of which the present application for clarification was filed, as the passage summarises them, were:

(A) The submission in November 2025 of the expert committee's report identifying a balanced corridor, and the notification in March 2026 of India's revised Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.
(B) The decision in November 2025 of the National Green Tribunal in a related matter, and the conclusion in March 2026 of a fresh round of negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
(C) The introduction in November 2025 of fresh legislation on renewable energy by Parliament, and the issue in March 2026 of new directions by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
(D) The conclusion in November 2025 of a memorandum of understanding between the Union and the affected State Governments, and the submission in March 2026 of a fresh report by the Comptroller and Auditor-General on transmission infrastructure.

108. The first of the two further directions issued by the Court in its order of 6 May 2026, as the passage describes it, requires that any future application for clearance of high-tension transmission infrastructure across critical wildlife habitat shall be accompanied by:

(A) An assessment of the project's contribution to the State's notified climate-mitigation pathway, conducted by the relevant Pollution Control Board in consultation with the wildlife authorities.
(B) An undertaking by the project proponent to compensate the State Wildlife Board for any reduction in the relevant habitat that may result from the project's implementation.
(C) An environmental clearance from the National Green Tribunal in addition to any clearance otherwise required under the existing statutory framework on the most natural construction of the available evidence.
(D) A finding by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change that no alternative routing is feasible without disproportionate cost to the project proponent.

109. The Court's observation about the operation of the climate right "in two directions", as the passage paraphrases it, is best captured as follows. The right operates both as:

(A) A protection in favour of human beings against the adverse effects of climate change, and as an analogous protection in favour of non-human species, including the Great Indian Bustard.
(B) A protection against the adverse effects of climate change in the territory of India, and as a protection against the adverse effects of climate change in the territory of any other State of the international community.
(C) A protection in favour of the present generation against the adverse effects of climate change, and as a corresponding obligation owed to future generations under the doctrine of intergenerational equity.
(D) A protection against the adverse effects of inadequate climate action, and as a constitutional warrant for measures of mitigation that are themselves capable of producing local environmental impacts of their own.

110. Suppose, in a future case, a project proponent sought clearance for high-tension transmission infrastructure across a critical wildlife habitat without producing the assessment described in the first of the present order's further directions. On the order's framing, the most likely consequence would be that:

(A) The application for clearance would be granted, the present order's requirement of an assessment being treated as directory rather than mandatory.
(B) The application for clearance would, on that ground alone, be incomplete and not capable of being considered on the merits until the assessment had been produced.
(C) The application for clearance would be referred to the Supreme Court for fresh consideration of the requirement of an assessment in respect of the particular habitat.
(D) The application for clearance would, by operation of the present order, be deemed to have been refused, with no further consideration of the underlying materials.

Passage 7 (Questions 111–115)

Defections, the Speaker, and the Tenth Schedule Reform Question

On 5 May 2026, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court delivered judgment in a batch of petitions arising out of the disqualification proceedings under the Tenth Schedule against thirteen Members of a State Legislative Assembly. The Speaker of the Assembly had reserved orders in the proceedings in September 2024 and had taken no further step until the dissolution of the Assembly in April 2026, at which point, on the Speaker's understanding, the proceedings had abated. The disqualified members, in the

meanwhile, had contested and won fresh elections under the colours of a different political party.

The Bench, by a unanimous opinion, held two propositions. First, that the period for which the Speaker may keep a disqualification petition under the Tenth Schedule pending without final order is, although unspecified in the Schedule itself, subject to a constitutional duty of expeditious disposal flowing from Article 14 and the doctrine that statutory powers are to be exercised within a reasonable time. The benchmark of three months indicated in the earlier judgment in Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Hon'ble Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly (2020) was confirmed as the working presumption, subject to recorded reasons for any departure. Secondly, that the dissolution of the Assembly does not, in itself, render disqualification proceedings academic where the underlying conduct of defection took place during the term of the dissolved Assembly and where the affected members have, on the strength of the defection, secured further electoral advantage during the subsistence of the unadjudicated petitions.

The Bench declined to disqualify the thirteen members directly, observing that the Tenth Schedule confers the adjudicatory function on the Speaker and that the Court's appellate jurisdiction does not extend to the substitution of its own findings on the merits without a prior decision below. It remitted the petitions to the new Speaker for disposal within a period of three months from the date of its order, and observed, in terms that have provoked much comment, that the persistent failure of Speakers to discharge the function with the expedition the Schedule requires has now reached a point at which Parliament may wish to consider transferring the function altogether to an independent tribunal.

111. Which of the following correctly states the first of the two propositions held by the Bench, as the passage describes it?

(A) The Speaker's power under the Tenth Schedule is subject to a constitutional duty of expeditious disposal flowing from Article 14, with a working presumption of three months derived from Keisham Meghachandra Singh.

(B) The Speaker's power under the Tenth Schedule is, on the express text of the Schedule itself, subject to a fixed time limit of six months that may not be extended in any circumstances.

(C) The Speaker's power under the Tenth Schedule is to be exercised only in concurrence with the Election Commission of India, the Schedule itself being silent on the matter.

(D) The Speaker's power under the Tenth Schedule abates on the dissolution of the Assembly, irrespective of the stage at which the proceedings stood at the date of dissolution.

112. The Bench's holding on the effect of dissolution of the Assembly on disqualification proceedings, as the passage describes it, is that:

(A) Dissolution renders the proceedings automatically academic in every case, the disqualification under the Tenth Schedule being incident to membership of the relevant Assembly in line with the position generally taken in the journals under the framework that the passage itself adopts as that proposition is conventionally understood.

(B) Dissolution does not render the proceedings academic where the underlying conduct took place during the term of the dissolved Assembly and the affected members have, on the strength of the defection, secured further electoral advantage during the subsistence of the petitions.

(C) Dissolution renders the proceedings academic only where the affected members did not contest the immediately following election, in which case the underlying conduct may again be the subject of fresh proceedings.

(D) Dissolution renders the proceedings academic only with the prior approval of the Election Commission of India, the matter being directly relevant to the conduct of subsequent elections.

113. The decision in Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Hon'ble Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly (2020), as the passage characterises it, is the authority on which the Bench relies for:

(A) The proposition that the Tenth Schedule is part of the basic structure of the Constitution and cannot be repealed by any constitutional amendment.

(B) The doctrine that the Speaker's adjudicatory function under the Tenth Schedule is, in its essence, a judicial function exercised by an officer of the Assembly.

(C) The working presumption of three months for the disposal of disqualification petitions under the Tenth Schedule, subject to recorded reasons for any departure.

(D) The proposition that a defection in favour of a registered political party is, on a careful reading of the Tenth Schedule, more readily justifiable than a defection in favour of an independent candidate.

114. The Bench declined to disqualify the thirteen members directly, as the passage describes it, on the ground that:

(A) The Speaker of the dissolved Assembly had, by his failure to dispose of the petitions in a reasonable time, exhausted the disqualification remedy under the Tenth Schedule altogether.

(B) The thirteen members had, in the interval between the original conduct of defection and the date of the present judgment, secured a fresh electoral mandate that displaced the older petitions.

(C) The Tenth Schedule confers the adjudicatory function on the Speaker and the Court's appellate jurisdiction does not extend to the substitution of its own findings on the merits without a prior decision below.

(D) The new Assembly had, by an amendment to its rules of procedure, abolished the office of Speaker and transferred its disqualification functions to a parliamentary committee constituted for the purpose.

115. Suppose Parliament were now to enact, on the suggestion the Bench has placed in the public domain, a constitutional amendment transferring the disqualification function under the Tenth Schedule from the Speaker to an independent tribunal. On the passage's framing, the most likely constitutional question to arise in any subsequent challenge to such an amendment would be:

(A) Whether the transfer of the function from a parliamentary officer to an external tribunal alters a feature of the relationship between the legislature and the adjudicatory branch that is part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

(B) Whether the new tribunal would, in respect of its functions, be required to obtain the prior concurrence of the President of India before issuing any order of disqualification under the amended Schedule.

(C) Whether the new tribunal would, in respect of its members, be required to be drawn exclusively from among retired judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts in equal proportion on the version of the doctrine most often defended in the conditions presupposed by the passage.

(D) Whether the new tribunal would, in respect of its procedure, be required to follow the same rules of evidence as those that apply to civil proceedings before the High Courts in their original side.

Passage 8 (Questions 116–120)

GST, Pith and Substance, and the Online Gaming Notification

On 9 May 2026, a Division Bench of the Supreme Court delivered judgment in a batch of writ petitions challenging a notification issued by the Government of India under the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017, which had, with effect from 1 October 2023, brought online real-money gaming squarely within the highest rate band of the integrated goods and services tax, treating the full face value of each entry deposit as the taxable supply. The petitioners, principally operators of online fantasy-sports platforms, contended that their offerings were games of skill rather than games of chance, and that the notification, in subjecting them to the same treatment as gambling, fell foul of the long line of Supreme Court authority distinguishing games of skill from games of chance for the purposes of State legislative competence under the Lists of the Seventh Schedule.

The Bench, while accepting that the older skill-versus-chance jurisprudence remained good law in respect of the limited question to which it had been addressed — namely, whether the activity in question fell within the State legislative entry on "betting and gambling" — held that the question for the present case was a different one. The legislative competence on which the impugned notification rested was traceable not to that entry, but to the comprehensive scheme for taxation of supplies of goods and services brought into effect by the constitutional amendment of 2016 and the central and State legislation made thereunder. On the doctrine of pith and substance, the true character of the impugned tax was a tax on supply for valuable consideration in the course of business, and the skill-versus-chance distinction was simply not engaged at the legislative-competence stage.

The Bench's reasoning then turned to the question of measure. It held that the choice of the full face value of each entry deposit as the measure of the tax, rather than the operator's gross gaming revenue, was a matter falling within the legitimate discretion of the GST Council and Parliament in the design of the levy, and was not, on the materials placed before the court, so unreasonable as to amount to a violation of Article 14 or Article 19(1)(g). The petitioners' challenge was, on that view, dismissed in its entirety, but the Bench observed in concluding that nothing in its reasoning precluded a future revisitation by the GST Council of the measure of the levy in the light of the experience of the intervening period.

116. The petitioners' principal contention against the impugned notification, as the passage summarises it, was that:

(A) The notification had been issued without the prior concurrence of the GST Council under the relevant provision of the Constitution, and was, on that ground alone, ultra vires the constitutional framework for the goods and services tax.

(B) Their offerings were games of skill rather than games of chance, and that the notification, in subjecting them to the same treatment as gambling, fell foul of the long line of Supreme Court authority distinguishing the two for the purposes of State legislative competence under the Lists of the Seventh Schedule.

(C) The notification operated retrospectively to the disadvantage of operators who had, on the strength of the older rate, made commercial commitments incapable of variation in the short term, and was therefore vulnerable on grounds of legitimate expectation.

(D) The notification subjected online fantasy-sports operators to a rate of tax higher than that applicable to comparable offline activities of an analogous economic character, and was therefore inconsistent with Article 304(a) of the Constitution.

117. The doctrine of pith and substance, as the Bench employs it in the passage, is invoked in support of which of the following propositions?

(A) That the State legislative entry on "betting and gambling" has been impliedly repealed by the constitutional amendment of 2016, and that the matter now falls within the Union List.
(B) That the older skill-versus-chance jurisprudence is no longer good law in respect of any question of legislative competence under the Lists of the Seventh Schedule on the analysis offered by the principal commentators for the reasons set out at length elsewhere in the literature.
(C) That the true character of the impugned tax, for the purposes of legislative competence, is a tax on supply for valuable consideration in the course of business, the skill-versus-chance distinction being unengaged at that stage.
(D) That the GST Council is, by virtue of its constitutional status, the sole arbiter of any question concerning the legislative competence to impose a tax on supplies of goods or services.

118. Which of the following correctly states the Bench's position on the continuing authority of the older skill-versus-chance jurisprudence, as the passage describes it?

(A) It applies only to those games which, in the view of the GST Council, do not generate sufficient annual revenue to justify their inclusion in the highest rate band of the integrated goods and services tax.
(B) It has been, by the present judgment, expressly overruled in its entirety in view of the constitutional amendment of 2016 and the central and State legislation made thereunder.
(C) It remains good law in respect of the limited question to which it had been addressed, namely, whether the activity in question falls within the State legislative entry on "betting and gambling".
(D) It has been, by the present judgment, confined to its application to games conducted outside the territory of India, and is no longer applicable to games conducted within Indian jurisdiction.

119. The Bench's reasoning on the question of measure, as the passage describes it, is best summarised as follows. The choice of the full face value of each entry deposit as the measure of the tax was:

(A) Inconsistent with Article 304(a) of the Constitution, but was nonetheless upheld in view of the absence of any showing of discrimination against the trade of any particular State.
(B) Inconsistent with the constitutional requirement that the measure of any indirect tax must correspond as closely as possible to the operator's economic surplus from the underlying transaction.
(C) Within the discretion of the GST Council but not of Parliament, the choice of measure being, on the constitutional architecture, a matter exclusively within the Council's authority.
(D) Within the legitimate discretion of the GST Council and Parliament in the design of the levy, and was not, on the materials placed before the court, so unreasonable as to amount to a violation of Article 14 or Article 19(1)(g).

120. Suppose, in a future case, a petitioner were to contend that a fresh State enactment imposing a separate State-level levy on online fantasy-sports operators was beyond the State's legislative competence on the ground that the activity was a game of skill and not betting and gambling. On the present judgment's framing, the most likely response to that contention would be that:

(A) The contention is foreclosed by the doctrine of pith and substance, since any tax on the activity is, on the present judgment's reasoning, automatically a tax on supply rather than on betting and gambling.
(B) The present judgment has overruled the older skill-versus-chance jurisprudence in its entirety, and the contention is no longer open to the petitioner in any subsequent case.
(C) The older skill-versus-chance jurisprudence remains good law in respect of the State legislative entry on "betting and gambling", and the contention would therefore have to be considered on its merits in the light of that jurisprudence.
(D) The contention is foreclosed by the constitutional amendment of 2016, which has transferred the entry on "betting and gambling" from the State List to the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule.

TAKE-HOME PRACTICE SET

Not part of the scored 120-question test. Attempt at home; answers at the end. Numbered T1–T70 so you do not confuse them with Q1–Q120 on the OMR. Rapid fire — these fill the booklet's leftover space (paper saving, ink saving).

A. Analytical Reasoning (Rapid Fire)

T1. In a code, BRIDGE is written as DTKFIG. How is CASTLE written in the same code?
(A) ECUWNG (B) ECVUNG (C) ECUVNG (D) EDUVNG

T2. Pointing to a woman, Rohit said, 'She is the daughter of the only sister of my father's father.' How is the woman related to Rohit?
(A) Aunt (B) Sister (C) Father's cousin (D) Grandmother

T3. Premises: All poets are dreamers. No dreamer is a banker. Some bankers are clerks. Which conclusion necessarily follows?
(A) No poet is a banker (B) Some clerks are poets (C) All clerks are dreamers (D) Some poets are clerks

T4. Six persons A, B, C, D, E, F sit in a circle facing the centre. A is between F and D. B is opposite D. C is to the immediate right of B. Who is to the immediate left of F?
(A) D (B) C (C) E (D) B

T5. If '×' means '+', '÷' means '–', '+' means '×' and '–' means '÷', then 18 ÷ 6 + 4 × 8 – 2 = ?
(A) 18 (B) 26 (C) 20 (D) 30

T6. Series: 3, 7, 16, 35, 74, ?
(A) 155 (B) 151 (C) 153 (D) 148

T7. Data Sufficiency: How is P related to Q? (i) P's mother is the sister of Q's father. (ii) Q's father has no brother. Which statement(s) are sufficient?
(A) Statement (ii) alone is sufficient (B) Both together are needed (C) Statement (i) alone is sufficient (D) Neither is sufficient

T8. A man walks 4 km North, 3 km East, 4 km South, and 5 km West. How far is he from the start?
(A) 2 km East (B) 3 km West (C) 1 km South (D) 2 km West

T9. If MONDAY is coded as 123456 and DYNAMO is coded as 463512, how is MAYDAN coded?
(A) 156456 (B) 165445 (C) 145456 (D) 154645

T10. Five books P, Q, R, S, T are stacked. R is above Q. S is below P. T is above P but below R. Which is at the bottom?
(A) P (B) Q (C) S (D) T

T11. Statements: Some pens are pencils. All pencils are erasers. Conclusions: I. Some pens are erasers. II. All erasers are pencils. Which follows?
(A) Both follow (B) Only I follows (C) Only II follows (D) Neither follows

T12. Clock: At what time between 3 and 4 o'clock do the hands of a clock coincide?
(A) Exactly 3:15 (B) About 3:16:21 (C) About 3:18 (D) About 3:20

T13. In a row of children facing North, Asha is 11th from the left and Bina is 9th from the right. They interchange positions; Asha becomes 23rd from the left. Total children?
(A) 30 (B) 33 (C) 31 (D) 29

T14. Odd one out: (i) Triangle (ii) Square (iii) Circle (iv) Pentagon
(A) Triangle (B) Square (C) Circle (D) Pentagon

B. Vocabulary (Synonyms & Antonyms — Advanced)

T15. SYNONYM of PERSPICACIOUS:
(A) Talkative (B) Discerning (C) Stubborn (D) Obtuse

T16. SYNONYM of OBSTREPEROUS:
(A) Sombre (B) Modest (C) Compliant (D) Unruly

T17. SYNONYM of SESQUIPEDALIAN:
(A) Childish (B) Long-winded (C) Hexagonal (D) Concise

T18. SYNONYM of PERFIDIOUS:
(A) Loyal (B) Pious (C) Treacherous (D) Bashful

T19. SYNONYM of RECONDITE:
(A) Familiar (B) Hostile (C) Esoteric (D) Brittle

T20. SYNONYM of PROPITIATE:
(A) Appease (B) Provoke (C) Postpone (D) Predict

TAKE-HOME ANSWER KEY

T1=C	T2=C	T3=A	T4=C	T5=B	T6=C	T7=C	T8=D	T9=D	T10=C
T11=B	T12=B	T13=C	T14=C	T15=B	T16=D	T17=B	T18=C	T19=C	T20=A