

**ANSWER KEY – 21 MAY 2026**

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	A	D
Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
C	B	C	B	D	A	B	D	C	A
Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
C	B	D	A	D	A	C	B	C	D
Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36				
B	A	D	A	B	C				

**SECTION A — LEGAL REASONING**

**Q1 B**

The doctrine of pith and substance asks the court to look at the true nature and character of the impugned law. Here, the legislation is in pith and substance a banking statute — a subject squarely under Entry 45 of the Union List. Its incidental impact on moneylending (a State List subject under Entry 30) does not destroy Parliament's competence. The classic statement of this rule comes from *Prafulla Kumar Mukherjee v. Bank of Commerce* (1947) and was followed in *State of Bombay v. FN. Balsara* (1951). Option (A) confuses pith-and-substance with severability — a distinct doctrine applied only when a law is partly ultra vires. Option (C) misstates Article 254, which applies to repugnancy on Concurrent List subjects, not List I versus List II. Option (D) invents a non-existent rule of implied consent. The correct answer is therefore (B).

**Q2 C**

*Prafulla Kumar Mukherjee v. Bank of Commerce* (1947) is the case in which the Privy Council articulated the doctrine of pith and substance in a clear and influential form, by examining the true character of the Bengal Money-Lenders Act, 1940 against the federal lists. The doctrine was thereafter consistently applied by the Supreme Court of India, beginning with *State of Bombay v. FN. Balsara* (1951). *Kesavananda Bharati* (1973) is the seat of the basic-structure doctrine; *Maneka Gandhi* (1978) revolutionised Article 21; and *Indra Sawhney* (1992) is the OBC reservation case. None of these address legislative competence in the federal-list sense. The correct answer is therefore (C).

**Q3 D**

The substantial purpose of the impugned law is compulsory acquisition for an industrial corridor — a subject within State legislative competence (Entry 18 of the State List concerns land; entries on industries within the State are also state-allocated). The incidental impact on inter-State trade is precisely the kind of overlap that pith-and-substance accommodates. Option (A) ignores the doctrine entirely and treats the lists as watertight, which the Privy Council in *Prafulla Kumar* expressly rejected. Option (C) refers to Article 252, which is a mechanism for States to surrender legislative jurisdiction — not relevant here. Option (D) (reading down) is a different interpretive tool applied to save a law from constitutional infirmity; it presupposes the law is otherwise valid in part. The correct answer is therefore (B).

**Q4 A**

The pith-and-substance doctrine is a tool of legislative competence: it tells the court whether a law made by Parliament or a State Legislature falls within the entries allocated to that body under the Seventh Schedule. Option (A) refers instead to Article 254, which is the repugnancy rule on Concurrent List subjects — a different doctrine. Option (B) refers to the basic-structure doctrine, which addresses limits on the amending power. Option (D) refers to ultra vires review of executive action — administrative law, not constitutional competence. The correct answer is therefore (C).

**Q5 B**

The doctrine of pith and substance is not confined to Concurrent-List disputes — its core use is in resolving alleged conflicts between Union List and State List entries when a law incidentally touches both. Option (D) therefore states an incorrect proposition and is the answer the question seeks. Options (A), (B) and (C) are accurate statements of the doctrine: courts examine the law's true character (A), incidental encroachment does not invalidate (B), and if the law is ultra vires in pith and substance the doctrine of severability cannot resuscitate it (C). The correct answer is therefore (D).

**Q6 C**

Where the substantial purpose of a statute is one thing while its ostensible form is another, the law is said to be colourable — and falls outside the legislature's competence. Here the Cess Act is dressed up as an education levy but is used to fund highways. The court will pierce the form and strike it down as colourable legislation, a doctrine well-articulated in *K.C. Gajapati Narayan Deo v. State of Orissa* (1953). Option (A) accepts the form at face value, which the doctrine forbids. Option (C) misclassifies education as State List — under the present Constitution, education is concurrent. Option (D) invents a non-existent reference procedure. The correct answer is therefore (B).

**Q7 D**

Where both parties are at fault, contributory negligence governs apportionment. Indian law has moved from the older 'last opportunity' rule to apportionment of damages in proportion to fault — see *Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay v. Laxman Iyer* (2003). Option (A) (volenti) is inapplicable: the pedestrian did not consent to the risk of being struck by a distracted driver; consent must be informed and specific. Option (B) revives the discarded last-opportunity rule and is no longer good law in India. Option (D) (res ipsa loquitur) only shifts the evidentiary burden where the cause is inexplicable without negligence; it does not govern apportionment between two found-faulty parties. The correct answer is therefore (C).

**Q8 A**

The neighbour principle articulated by Lord Atkin in *Donoghue v. Stevenson* (1932) holds that one owes a duty of care to persons so closely and directly affected by one's acts that one ought reasonably to have them in contemplation as being so affected. Foreseeability — not contract — is the touchstone. Option (A) reverts to the pre-1932 contractual privity rule that *Donoghue* was decided to overturn. Option (C) introduces a fabricated jurisdictional limit. Option (D) conflates duty (the question *Donoghue* answers) with causation (a separate element of the tort). The correct answer is therefore (B).

**Q9 A**

Children below the age of discretion are not held to adult standards of care and ordinarily cannot be contributorily negligent. The Indian position broadly mirrors the English common law position, and a four-year-old falls comfortably within this protected category. Option (A) imposes adult-standard responsibility on an infant — inconsistent with the law of negligence as applied to children. Option (B) (mechanical apportionment) ignores the principle altogether. Option (D) confuses tort apportionment with juvenile justice, which deals with criminal responsibility, not civil damages. The correct answer is therefore (C).

**Q10 D**

Volenti non fit injuria — to one who consents, no harm is done — is a complete defence available where the plaintiff knowingly and voluntarily accepted the risk in question. Boarding a car despite knowing the driver is drunk is the textbook fact pattern (*Dann v. Hamilton* (1939) discusses limits of the defence). Option (A) (contributory negligence) only reduces damages; here a complete defence is available. Option (C) (inevitable accident) requires that no reasonable care could have averted the collision — driving drunk is the opposite of reasonable care. Option (D) (act of God) requires natural forces beyond human control, which drunkenness is not. The correct answer is therefore (B).

**Q11 C**

Res ipsa loquitur ('the thing speaks for itself') is an evidentiary doctrine. Where (i) the instrumentality is in the defendant's exclusive control, (ii) the accident is of a kind that ordinarily would not occur without negligence, and (iii) the plaintiff had no contribution to the harm, the doctrine raises an inference of negligence that the defendant must rebut. It does NOT impose strict liability (Option A is therefore wrong — strict liability is a substantive standard, not an evidentiary one), it does not function in tort like criminal mens rea (Option C), and it does not authorise aggravated damages without proof (Option D). The correct answer is therefore (B).

**Q12 B**

The four essential ingredients of negligence are: (i) duty of care, (ii) breach, (iii) causation in fact and in law, and (iv) actionable damage. Motive is irrelevant to the tort of negligence — the inquiry is into the standard of care that was actually met, not into why the defendant acted. A driver who runs over a pedestrian out of pure carelessness, with no animus whatsoever, is just as liable as one who acted with hostility. Options (A), (B) and (D) are all essentials; Option (C) is the one ingredient the law does NOT require. The correct answer is therefore (C).

## SECTION B — ANALYTICAL REASONING

**Q13 C**

From the clues: position 1 is S (Yellow), position 2 is U (Blue), position 3 is T (White), position 6 is R. The two free slots are positions 4 and 5, for the two remaining boxes P and Q. Clue (v) requires P immediately above Q, so P is at position 4 and Q at position 5. The three unused colours are Red, Green and Black, to be distributed among P, Q and R. Clue (vi) requires Red immediately above Green; the only adjacent pair among positions 5-6 (since position 4-5 cannot carry Red over Green if Q-R is the pair, but P-Q is also possible). If P were Red and Q Green, that violates clue (vii) which forbids P from being Red. Hence the Red-Green pair must be Q (position 5) and R (position 6), with Q = Red and R = Green. P therefore takes the only remaining colour, Black. The correct answer is (B).

**Q14 B**

Continuing the same deduction: positions 1-6 carry S(Yellow), U(Blue), T(White), P, Q, R respectively. The three remaining colours (Red, Green, Black) attach to P, Q, R. Clue (vi) requires Red immediately above Green; the only feasible adjacent pair is positions 5-6, i.e. Q and R. Clue (vii) excludes P from Red, which independently confirms that the Red-Green pair is not P-Q. Hence Q is Red (position 5) and R is Green (position 6), with P taking Black. The colour of box Q is Red. The correct answer is (B).

**Q15 D**

In the unique solution, the Red box is Q at position 5 and box T (White) is at position 3. The boxes strictly between them lie at positions 4 only — that is, exactly one box (P, the Black box). Hence the count of intervening boxes is one. Options (B), (C) and (D) over-count. The correct answer is (A). Students often miscount by including the endpoint positions themselves; the question explicitly restricts the count to strictly intervening boxes.

**Q16 A**

The Black box is P at position 4. Removing P collapses the stack: every box originally below P (Q at 5, R at 6) moves up by one position, becoming positions 4 and 5 in the new five-box stack. The new arrangement is S(1), U(2), T(3), Q(4), R(5). The bottom-most box of the reduced stack is therefore R. Among the listed options, R is option (D). The correct answer is (D).

**Q17 B**

Total points across the round-robin are 20 (10 games  $\times$  2). From clue (v), Chetan won 2 and drew 0, scoring exactly 4. From clue (ii),  $B + C = A + D$ , so  $2A + 2D + E = 20$ , giving  $E = 20 - 2(A + D)$ . Clue (iv) gives  $C > D > E$ , so  $D < 4$  and  $E < D$ . Clue (iii) gives Esha at least 1 point (the draw with Bhavna). Testing  $A = 6, D = 3: E = 20 - 18 = 2$  ( $\geq 1 \checkmark, < D = 3 \checkmark$ ).  $B = A + D - C = 6 + 3 - 4 = 5$ . Final standings:  $A = 6, B = 5, C = 4, D = 3, E = 2$  — all distinct, all between 0 and 8, with A strictly first. Higher values of A produce inconsistencies ( $A = 7$  forces  $E = 0$ , contradicting the draw with B;  $A = 8$  forces E negative). Aarav scored 6. The correct answer is (B).

**Q18 D**

From the standings derived above ( $A = 6, B = 5, C = 4, D = 3, E = 2$ ), Esha finished last with 2 points. This is consistent with clue (iv) (Divya above Esha, below Chetan) and clue (iii) (Esha drew with Bhavna and lost to Aarav). The two drawn games in the tournament (clue vi) are Bhavna-Esha and Divya-Esha; both pieces of Esha's two points come from these draws, with losses to Aarav and Chetan accounting for the remaining games. Esha's final position is last. The correct answer is (D).

**Q19 C**

Clue (iii) directly states that Esha drew her game against Bhavna — so Bhavna and Esha is a drawn pair, matching option (B). The second drawn game is Divya-Esha (which gives Esha the 2 points required by the standings derived above and Divya the 1 point needed beyond her win against Aarav). Option (A) (Aarav-Divya) and option (D) (Aarav-Bhavna) describe non-draws — Aarav drew none of his games in the unique standings. Option (C) (Chetan-Divya) is ruled out by clue (v) which states Chetan drew none. The correct answer is (B).

**Q20 A**

Originally Aarav beat Chetan in their head-to-head game. Reversing this single result transfers 2 points from Aarav to Chetan: Aarav loses 2 points ( $6 - 2 = 4$ ) and Chetan gains 2 points ( $4 + 2 = 6$ ). Other results and other players' scores are unchanged: Bhavna 5, Divya 3, Esha 2. The new standings become Chetan 6, Bhavna 5, Aarav 4, Divya 3, Esha 2. Chetan alone tops the standings with 6 points. Option (A) (Aarav alone) ignores the score swap; option (C) (tied) over-counts; option (D) (Bhavna alone) ignores Chetan's gain. The correct answer is (B).

## SECTION C — QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

**Q21 C**

Total FY24 capacity = 180 GW; FY25 = 206 GW. Growth =  $(206 - 180)/180 \times 100 = 26/180 \times 100 = 14.44\%$ . Among the options, 14.4% is the closest. Option (C). The arithmetic:  $26 \div 180 = 0.14444\dots$ , multiplied by 100 = 14.44%. Hence the growth rate is approximately 14.4%, eliminating 11.5%, 13.0% and 16.2% as either too low or too high. The total renewable additions in FY25 were dominated by Solar (+22.5 GW) and Wind (+4.0 GW), with Biomass adding +0.5 GW and Small Hydro and Large Hydro each contracting marginally.

**Q22 B**

Solar FY25 = 104.5 GW; target = 500 GW. Percentage =  $104.5/500 \times 100 = 20.9\%$ . Option (B). The arithmetic:  $104.5 \div 500 = 0.209$ , multiplied by 100 = 20.9%. Of the listed options, 20.9% is exact. To reach 500 GW by FY30 from a 206 GW base requires roughly 294 GW of additions over five years, or about 59 GW per year — more than double the FY25 net addition of 26 GW. Solar alone, at its current contribution level, supplies just over a fifth of the 2030 target.

**Q23 D**

Solar YoY addition = +22.5 GW; Wind YoY = +4.0 GW. The ratio is  $22.5 : 4.0 = 225 : 40 = 45 : 8$ . Option (C). Cross-check:  $45 \div 8 = 5.625$ , and  $22.5 \div 4.0 = 5.625$  — match confirmed. Option (A) ( $9:2 = 4.5$ ) is incorrect; option (B) ( $11:2 = 5.5$ ) is close but not exact; option (D) ( $5:1 = 5$ ) is wrong. The 45:8 ratio reflects the fact that Solar additions outpaced Wind additions by a factor of nearly 5.6 in FY25 — consistent with the broader Indian energy transition trend of Solar leading capacity growth.

**Q24 A**

FY25 net addition = 26 GW. If India adds 26 GW each year for FY26 through FY30 (5 years), total additions =  $5 \times 26 = 130$  GW. Capacity at end of FY30 =  $206 + 130 = 336$  GW. Shortfall from 500 GW =  $500 - 336 = 164$  GW. Option (A). The other options (144, 124, 104) correspond to higher implied annual additions that the question does not give. The arithmetic is straightforward but tests careful reading: the question asks for the shortfall, not the additions required. India's actual policy intent is to accelerate additions sharply, but at FY25's pace the target is missed by 164 GW — nearly a third of the goal.

**Q25 D**

We test each statement. (A) Solar share in FY25 =  $51\% > 50\% \checkmark$  supported. (B) Wind 24% + Large Hydro 18% =  $42\% > 40\% \checkmark$  supported. (C) Small Hydro YoY change is  $-0.5$  GW and Large Hydro is also  $-0.5$  GW — both NEGATIVE. So 'every source recorded a positive YoY addition' is FALSE. Hence (C) is NOT supported. (D) Solar added 22.5 GW, the largest absolute increment  $\checkmark$  supported. The question asks which is NOT supported — so the answer is (C). A common error is to skim only the FY25 mix column and miss the YoY change column where the negative numbers appear.

**Q26 A**

Kerala's total = Teaching 55 + Infra 12 + Research 10 + Welfare 18 = 95. Per-student spend = ₹95,000. Option (C). The other options (85, 90, 98) correspond to partial or mis-added totals. Kerala stands out for the highest Teaching salary share — reflecting its political-economic emphasis on higher faculty pay — and the highest Welfare share, consistent with its strong scholarship and hostel ecosystem. Bihar by contrast totals 32 + 10 + 4 + 6 = ₹52,000 per student — the lowest of the five, just over half of Kerala's per-student spend.

**Q27 C**

Computing the Research share for each state: Karnataka 15/85 = 17.6%; Tamil Nadu 12/92 = 13.0%; Maharashtra 18/86 = 20.9%; Kerala 10/95 = 10.5%; Bihar 4/52 = 7.7%. The highest Research share is Maharashtra at ~20.9%. Option (B). A naive reader might choose Karnataka, which has the second-highest absolute Research spend (₹15k) — but the question asks for SHARE of total per-student spend, not absolute. Maharashtra's combination of moderate Teaching and high Research yields the highest Research share among the five, consistent with its industrial-policy emphasis on R&D-linked institutions.

**Q28 B**

Tamil Nadu per-student Teaching spend = ₹48,000. Enrolment = 2,200 thousand = 22,00,000 students. Total Teaching budget = 48,000 × 22,00,000 = ₹1,05,60,00,00,000 = ₹10,560 crore. Option (B). The arithmetic: 48,000 × 22 lakh = (48 × 22) crore in thousand-rupee units = 1,056 thousand-crore? Re-checking units: 48,000 rupees/student × 22,00,000 students = 1,056 × 10<sup>8</sup> rupees = 10,560 × 10<sup>7</sup> = ₹10,560 crore. Confirmed. Other options correspond to incorrect enrolment or rate substitution.

**Q29 C**

Bihar total = ₹52,000; Kerala total = ₹95,000. Ratio = 52/95 × 100 = 54.7%, which rounds to approximately 55%. Option (B). The arithmetic: 52 ÷ 95 = 0.5473..., multiplied by 100 = 54.73%. Among the options 48%, 55%, 60%, 65% — 55% is closest. The disparity highlights a fiscal gap that policy economists frequently cite: Bihar's per-student spend is barely over half of Kerala's, despite Bihar having a larger absolute student population (1,400 vs 900 thousand). Per-capita capacity rather than population scale determines per-student outlay here.

**Q30 D**

Maharashtra's current per-student total = 38 + 22 + 18 + 8 = ₹86,000. After change: Research becomes 18 × 1.5 = 27; Welfare becomes 8 × 1.25 = 10. Teaching and Infra are unchanged at 38 and 22. New total = 38 + 22 + 27 + 10 = ₹97,000. Hence the new per-student spend equals ₹97,000 — option (B). The other choices either fail to apply both percentage hikes or confuse the multiplicative factors (50% becomes ×1.5; 25% becomes ×1.25, not addition of 25). The correct answer is (B).

SECTION D — RAPID-FIRE MIXED REASONING & GK

**Q31 B**

The Caesar-style shift inferred from PEN → RGP works thus: P → R (+2), E → G (+2), N → P (+2). Each letter is shifted forward by 2 alphabetic positions. Applying the same +2 rule to INK: I → K, N → P, K → M, yielding KPM. The other options reflect alternative shift values (e.g., +1 or -2) or reversed mappings that do not match the demonstrated PEN-RGP code. The correct answer is (A).

**Q32 A**

Mira's mother's mother is her maternal grandmother. The 'only daughter' of the grandmother is Mira's mother (assuming Mira's mother has no sisters — which the phrasing 'only daughter' confirms). Hence the lady in the photograph is Mira's mother. Option (A). A common trap is to treat the phrasing as a description of Mira herself, but the photograph is specifically of the grandmother's daughter.

**Q33 D**

Track net displacement on a coordinate grid. Starting at origin, +4 east → (4, 0). Then -3 north (i.e., south) → (4, -3). Then -8 east (i.e., west) → (-4, -3). Then +3 north → (-4, 0). The man is now 4 km due west of the starting point. Option (A). The east-west net is +4 - 8 = -4 (west); the north-south net is -3 + 3 = 0. Hence the displacement vector is 4 km west, with no north-south component.

**Q34 A**

Statement 1: 'All teachers are readers' — every T is R. Statement 2: 'Some readers are writers' — there exists an R that is also a W; but it does not have to be a T. Conclusion I ('Some teachers are writers') therefore does not necessarily follow: the writers among the readers may be entirely outside the teacher set. Conclusion II ('All writers are readers') also does not follow — we only know SOME readers are writers, not that all writers are readers. Hence neither conclusion follows. Option (D).

**Q35 B**

Pattern: each term is double the previous minus 1. 7×2-1=13; 13×2-1=25; 25×2-1=49; 49×2-1=97; 97×2-1=193. Option (C). Alternative formulation: each term = 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, 192 (powers of 2 multiplied by 6) plus 1. 6·2 = 12 + 1 = 13; 6·4 = 24 + 1 = 25; 6·32 = 192 + 1 = 193. Both formulations confirm the next term is 193.

**Q36 C**

Article 21 of the Constitution of India reads: 'No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.' This is the right to life and personal liberty — expansively interpreted in Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978) to include due process, and later to include the right to dignity, privacy, health, livelihood and many others. Option (A) refers to Article 19(1)(a); option (B) refers to Article 14; option (C) refers to Article 32. The correct answer is (D).