# Daily RC & CR Sheet — 17 May 2026

**20 Qs · 30 Min**
+1 / –0.25

**Daily Reading Comprehension & Critical Reasoning**
Two RC passages (English-as-Language) and two CR passages (Argumentation). Read each carefully and answer based on what is stated or implied.
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## PASSAGE 1 (RC) — THE ETHICS OF ART RESTORATION (CULTURE / AESTHETICS) Q1–5

**READ CAREFULLY AND ANSWER Q1–5 BASED ONLY ON THE PASSAGE.**

The cleaning of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling, completed in 1994, ignited an argument that has not really ended. Before the cleaning, the figures glowed with a sombre, smoky majesty; after it, they emerged into a startling palette of pinks, lime greens and lemon yellows. The restoration team insisted that the smoky tones had been the cumulative accident of five centuries of candle soot, glue varnishes and well-meaning earlier 'retouches'; what they had uncovered, they said, was the original. Their critics — equally distinguished — replied that the smoky tones WERE in some sense the original, since Michelangelo had himself applied a final dark glaze over the bright pigments to soften them; the restoration had stripped not only the soot but the artist's deliberate finishing layer.

The Sistine controversy crystallised a question that runs through every restoration. WHICH ORIGINAL is the restorer trying to recover? The painting as it left the artist's hand? The painting as the artist intended it to look once dried and properly varnished? The painting as the patron and the artist's contemporaries first saw it on the wall? The painting as it has been since some past restoration that has, through long acquaintance, become canonical in its own right? Each answer implies a different intervention, and the choice is rarely a neutrally 'technical' one.

A second, less discussed question is whether reversibility should be a constraint on restoration. The modern consensus, as articulated by the Venice Charter of 1964, is that any restoration intervention should be reversible — that successor generations should retain the option to undo it. This is a counsel of epistemic humility: we may discover, in fifty years, that we were wrong about a pigment, a varnish, a structural decision. Irreversible intervention, even when based on the best available evidence, forecloses correction.

The third question is the BOUNDARY between restoration and reconstruction. A painting with significant losses presents the restorer with a choice: leave the losses visible (the 'archaeological' approach), retouch them with neutral marks that signal their nature on close inspection (the integration approach), or invisibly fill them with the restorer's best guess at what the original contained. Each approach implies a different theory of the painting's value — as historical document, as aesthetic experience, as object of contemplation. No principle dissolves these difficulties. Restoration is irreducibly a practice of judgement under uncertainty.

**1. The author cites the Sistine Chapel cleaning controversy PRIMARILY to:**

◯ **A.** Recommend a permanent ban on restoration of frescos
◯ **B.** ILLUSTRATE the central interpretive problem of restoration — which 'original' the restorer should recover — through a case where rival distinguished views genuinely disagreed about what the original even was
◯ **C.** Demonstrate the technical incompetence of the 1994 restorers
◯ **D.** Argue that older paintings should never be cleaned

**2. Which of the following positions does the Venice Charter of 1964, as described in the passage, MOST DIRECTLY support?**

◯ **A.** Restoration interventions should be invisible to the public
◯ **B.** Restoration is unnecessary for properly stored works
◯ **C.** Restoration interventions should be designed to be REVERSIBLE so that successor generations retain the option to undo them if subsequent evidence requires a different approach
◯ **D.** Restoration interventions should always reflect the patron's original intent

**3. The author's treatment of the three approaches to filling losses (archaeological, integration, invisible) is BEST described as:**

◯ **A.** Endorsing the archaeological approach as the only legitimate one
◯ **B.** Dismissing all three as incompatible with restoration ethics
◯ **C.** Endorsing the invisible-fill approach for aesthetic reasons
◯ **D.** Neutral and analytical — each approach 'implies a different theory of the painting's value', and the author presents them as legitimate alternative theoretical commitments rather than ranking them

**4. Which inference about the author's overall stance is BEST supported by the passage?**

◯ **A.** The author treats restoration as a problem with a clear principled solution awaiting better technology
◯ **B.** The author treats restoration as IRREDUCIBLY a practice of judgement under uncertainty — no principle dissolves the difficulties, and the best practitioners acknowledge this
◯ **C.** The author advocates leaving all old paintings unrestored
◯ **D.** The author advocates discarding the Venice Charter framework

**5. The CRITICS of the 1994 Sistine cleaning argued, according to the passage, that the smoky tones were:**

◯ **A.** An accident of candle soot accumulated over centuries
◯ **B.** Imposed by 19th-century restorers in violation of Michelangelo's wishes
◯ **C.** In some sense ORIGINAL — Michelangelo had himself applied a final dark glaze, and the restoration had stripped not only later additions but the artist's deliberate finishing layer
◯ **D.** An optical illusion produced by changes in the chapel's lighting

## PASSAGE 2 (RC) — NEURODIVERSITY IN THE INDIAN WORKPLACE (SOCIETY / LABOUR) Q6–10

**READ CAREFULLY AND ANSWER Q6–10 BASED ONLY ON THE PASSAGE.**

The phrase 'neurodiversity' was coined in the late 1990s to capture a simple proposition: the variation in human cognition — autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette's, and the wider family of conditions once classified as disorders — is part of the natural variation of human minds, and need not always be treated as deficit. The proposition has political and clinical implications, but its workplace implications, particularly in the Indian corporate context, have only recently begun to be taken seriously.

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The Indian recruitment and retention systems were designed around a notional 'typical' employee — one whose communication, attention regulation and sensory processing fall within a narrow normative band. The interview process privileges fluent extemporaneous speech under stress; open-plan offices privilege the ability to filter ambient noise; team-collaboration norms reward immediate verbal participation in meetings. None of these is necessarily a poor proxy for productivity, but each filters out subsets of talented individuals whose cognitive profile is misaligned with the proxy rather than with the underlying job.

The instructive cases come from sectors where the cost of this misalignment is most visible. Software-engineering firms, several of which have run neurodiversity-hiring pilots since the late 2010s, report that candidates who interview poorly under traditional formats often perform at the top of the team within six months — provided the work environment is adjusted: written task descriptions, scheduled rather than ambient communication, sensory-modulated workspaces, and clear performance feedback in writing. The interventions are alternative defaults, not exotic concessions.

The BUSINESS CASE for neurodiversity hiring is real but should not be overstated. Some neurodivergent profiles correlate with strengths the corporate sector explicitly values — pattern recognition in autism, hyperfocus in ADHD when paired with engaging tasks. But the deeper case is that the standard workplace systematically EXCLUDES capable employees through proxies unrelated to actual job performance. Correcting this is a matter of accuracy in talent identification, not charitable accommodation. A mature implementation requires re-examination of performance reviews, promotion criteria and the unspoken cultural norms that govern collaboration. The right question is not 'should we accommodate?' but 'where do our existing defaults filter on the wrong proxy, and can we redesign the default?'

**6. What is the author's PRIMARY argument about neurodiversity in the Indian workplace?**

◯ **A.** Indian workplaces should redesign defaults that filter talent on PROXIES unrelated to actual job performance, recognising neurodiversity hiring as a matter of accuracy in talent identification rather than charitable accommodation
◯ **B.** Indian workplaces should adopt all neurodiverse candidates without screening
◯ **C.** Neurodivergent profiles are superior to typical profiles
◯ **D.** Neurodiversity is a clinical, not a workplace, concept

**7. The author's tone toward the BUSINESS CASE for neurodiversity hiring is BEST described as:**

◯ **A.** Effusive — the business case is described as overwhelming
◯ **B.** Hostile — the author rejects the business case as unworthy
◯ **C.** Indifferent — the author has no view
◯ **D.** Measured — the case is real but 'should not be overstated'; the deeper case is structural exclusion through wrong proxies, not the superiority of neurodivergent profiles

**8. Which of the following workplace adjustments would the author MOST PROBABLY ENDORSE, based on the passage?**

◯ **A.** Replacing all open-plan offices with mandatory cubicles
◯ **B.** Abolishing performance reviews altogether
◯ **C.** Re-designing interview formats so that fluent extemporaneous speech under stress is not the dominant proxy, particularly for roles where it is not the underlying job demand
◯ **D.** Reserving a fixed quota of senior positions for neurodivergent candidates

**9. What is the FUNCTION of the example of the customer-care role in the final paragraph?**

◯ **A.** It refutes the entire passage by showing neurodiversity hiring is unworkable
◯ **B.** It is an unrelated aside
◯ **C.** It HONESTLY ACKNOWLEDGES that not every role can be re-designed — some genuinely require a particular profile — reframing the question from 'should we accommodate?' to 'where does the default filter on the wrong proxy?'
◯ **D.** It argues for the abolition of customer-care roles

**10. The author's view of the standard Indian recruitment process is that it:**

◯ **A.** Is optimally designed for productivity prediction
◯ **B.** Filters out neurodivergent talent through PROXIES (interview style, open-plan offices, immediate verbal participation) that are not necessarily poor measures of productivity, but that screen for cognitive profile rather than for the underlying job demands
◯ **C.** Should be replaced with random selection
◯ **D.** Is irrelevant in a knowledge economy

## PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD INDIA BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTICS OUTRIGHT? (ENVIRONMENT / PUBLIC POLICY) Q11–15

**READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11–15.**

India's existing approach to single-use plastics is a phased ban introduced in 2022, targeting specific items — earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic flags, candy sticks, straws, stirrers, and certain wrappers — while leaving the broader category of plastic packaging substantially untouched. The proposal advanced here is that the phased approach should be replaced with a COMPREHENSIVE BAN ON ALL SINGLE-USE PLASTICS within a fixed three-year transition window, with statutory carve-outs only for medical and food-safety applications where no alternative meets the safety threshold.

Three arguments support the comprehensive approach. First, the phased ban has been a regulatory failure. Enforcement records from State Pollution Control Boards show that prohibited items continue to circulate at scale; small manufacturers absorb the fine as a cost of doing business, and targeted items reappear under modified product descriptions. The problem is the narrowness of scope, which leaves the broader plastic supply chain operational and the targeted items easily camouflaged within it.

Second, the substitution economics work only at SCALE. Manufacturers will not invest seriously in alternatives — paper, compostable bioplastics, returnable glass — while the parallel plastic supply chain remains profitable. A comprehensive ban removes that parallel chain and triggers the capital investment in alternative production that the phased approach has failed to call forth. Comparable transitions (Rwanda's 2008 plastic-bag ban; the EU's 2021 single-use directive) suggest comprehensive measures generate sharper supply-side adjustments than incremental ones.

Third, the public-health and ecological costs of continued plastic pollution are now incommensurable with the convenience benefits of the targeted items. Microplastic burden in Indian rivers, soils and human tissue has crossed thresholds the phased ban was not designed to address. The proportionality calculus has shifted, and the burden of proof should lie with those who would preserve specific applications.

Two objections deserve engagement. The livelihood objection — that small plastic-manufacturing workers will lose employment — is real and merits a transition package combining skill-redeployment, time-limited income support and credit for capital conversion. The cost-pass-through objection — that consumer prices will rise — is partly true but bounded; the additional cost of alternative packaging lies within a single-digit percentage of retail price for the affected categories.

**11. Which is the MAIN CONCLUSION of the argument?**

◯ **A.** India's phased ban on specific single-use plastics should be retained without change
◯ **B.** All plastics should be banned immediately without exceptions
◯ **C.** India should REPLACE the phased ban with a COMPREHENSIVE ban on all single-use plastics within a three-year transition window, with statutory carve-outs only where no alternative meets the safety threshold
◯ **D.** Single-use plastics should be taxed but not banned

**12. Which of the following would MOST SUBSTANTIALLY WEAKEN the author's second argument (that substitution economics work only at scale)?**

◯ **A.** Rigorous evidence from a comparable middle-income country that a comprehensive single-use-plastics ban FAILED to trigger investment in alternative-material production — and that despite the ban, alternative supply remained inadequate, shortages persisted, and the parallel illicit plastic chain expanded rather than contracted
◯ **B.** Evidence that paper packaging is heavier than plastic
◯ **C.** Evidence that the EU 2021 directive included some exemptions
◯ **D.** Evidence that Rwanda is a smaller country than India

**13. Which UNSTATED ASSUMPTION is most central to the author's third argument (about microplastic burden)?**

◯ **A.** The microplastic problem is fully understood
◯ **B.** All microplastics derive from single-use plastics targeted by the proposal
◯ **C.** That the PROPORTIONALITY BALANCE between public-health/ecological harm and the convenience of single-use items has shifted decisively — an empirical claim about the magnitude of microplastic harm relative to the consumer surplus from those items
◯ **D.** Microplastics are an exclusively Indian problem

**14. The author's response to the LIVELIHOOD objection is BEST characterised as:**

◯ **A.** Outright rejection of the objection
◯ **B.** A CONCESSION-AND-DESIGN response — accepting the objection as real, then proposing specific calibrating measures (skill redeployment, time-limited income support, credit for capital conversion) that address the underlying concern while preserving the core policy
◯ **C.** Dismissing the workers as politically irrelevant
◯ **D.** Postponing the issue until after the ban takes effect

**15. Which of the following pieces of evidence, if true, would MOST STRENGTHEN the author's first argument (that the phased ban has been a regulatory failure)?**

◯ **A.** Evidence that the phased ban was popular with the urban middle class
◯ **B.** DOCUMENTED ENFORCEMENT DATA from multiple State Pollution Control Boards showing that, since 2022, the targeted prohibited items continue to circulate at high volumes, that small manufacturers absorb fines as a routine cost, and that targeted items reappear under modified product descriptions
◯ **C.** Evidence that the phased ban was modelled on a similar ban elsewhere
◯ **D.** Evidence that paper alternatives have improved since 2022

## PASSAGE 4 (CR) — SHOULD THE HIGHER JUDICIARY HAVE TERM LIMITS? (CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM) Q16–20

**READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.**

Judges of the Supreme Court of India hold office until age sixty-five; High Court judges until sixty-two. There is no fixed term limit independent of the retirement age. The proposal here is narrower than full constitutional re-engineering: the retirement-age framework should be SUPPLEMENTED with a FIXED, NON-RENEWABLE TENURE for Supreme Court appointments — say, twelve years — applicable to judges elevated after a notified date and combined with a corresponding raise in the retirement age, so that the predominantly effective constraint on tenure becomes the fixed term rather than calendar age.

The principal argument for fixed tenure is INSTITUTIONAL — the reduction of late-career incentive distortions. The current system creates a documented pattern in which judges approaching retirement age sometimes accept post-retirement assignments (tribunals, commissions, gubernatorial appointments) whose offer lies within the gift of the Executive. The mere POSSIBILITY of such an offer — whether or not in fact made or accepted — creates a perception of dependence inconsistent with judicial independence. A fixed twelve-year tenure leaves a substantially shorter retirement runway.

A second argument is COMPARATIVE. The constitutional courts of most comparable democracies — the US Supreme Court (life tenure), the German Federal Constitutional Court (twelve-year non-renewable terms), the South African Constitutional Court (twelve to fifteen-year non-renewable terms) — use either life tenure or fixed non-renewable terms, NOT age-based retirement, as the principal tenure mechanism. India is an outlier in relying on age as the principal constraint.

The most serious objection is constitutional. Articles 124 and 217 fix retirement ages, and altering the tenure mechanism would require constitutional amendment. The reply is direct: amendment is precisely the mechanism the proposal contemplates. A subsidiary objection is operational — that fixed tenure may pressure judges to author headline-grabbing decisions in their final years. This is a real risk, but mitigable through case-management protocols and norms around the composition of important Constitution Bench cases.

What the proposal does NOT claim is that age-based retirement is irrational or that the present judiciary has been compromised. It claims that the fixed-tenure mechanism is better-designed for the specific risk of post-retirement incentive distortion.

**16. What is the MAIN CONCLUSION of the argument?**

◯ **A.** The retirement age for judges should be abolished

◯ **B.** The retirement-age framework should be SUPPLEMENTED with a FIXED, NON-RENEWABLE twelve-year tenure for Supreme Court appointments (post a notified date), combined with a raise in retirement age — so that fixed term becomes the predominant constraint

◯ **C.** All judges should serve for life

◯ **D.** The Executive should appoint judges directly without collegium input

**17. Which of the following PRINCIPLES, if accepted, would BEST defend the author's first argument (about reducing late-career incentive distortions)?**

◯ **A.** Judicial independence requires not only the ABSENCE of actual dependence on the Executive but also the absence of structural arrangements that create a PERCEPTION of dependence — and the tenure regime should be designed to minimise both

◯ **B.** Judicial decisions should always favour the Executive

◯ **C.** Post-retirement assignments are always illegitimate

◯ **D.** The retirement age should never be raised

**18. Which of the following, if rigorously documented, would MOST SUBSTANTIALLY WEAKEN the author's comparative argument?**

◯ **A.** Evidence that some Indian judges have written distinguished judgements after age 65

◯ **B.** Evidence that the German and South African systems also have non-judicial flaws unrelated to the tenure question

◯ **C.** Evidence that, in the major constitutional democracies cited (Germany, South Africa, US), the FIXED-TENURE or life-tenure regimes have themselves produced equal or greater post-tenure incentive distortion — through aggressive ideological courtship of governments or through actively-pursued post-tenure roles — undermining the implicit claim that those regimes solve the problem the Indian proposal targets

◯ **D.** Evidence that the Indian Supreme Court hears more cases per year than other courts cited

**19. The author's response to the operational objection (that fixed tenure may pressure judges to author headline-grabbing decisions in their final years) is BEST characterised as:**

◯ **A.** An outright rejection of the objection

◯ **B.** An emotional appeal independent of the design question

◯ **C.** A dismissal of judicial behaviour as irrelevant

◯ **D.** A CONCESSION-AND-MITIGATION response — accepting the risk as real, then proposing specific design responses (case-management protocols, norms around composition of Constitution Bench cases) that mitigate it without abandoning the proposal

**20. The final paragraph (specifying what the proposal does NOT claim) functions in the argument as:**

◯ **A.** An unrelated aside

◯ **B.** A REPUDIATION of the proposal itself

◯ **C.** A NARROWING move that pre-empts uncharitable misreadings — clarifying that the proposal does not allege irrationality in age-based retirement or compromise in the present judiciary, but is offered as a better-designed solution for the specific incentive risk and as alignment with comparative practice

◯ **D.** A claim that the existing judiciary should be replaced wholesale

## SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

**Q21–24 · 4 Marks**

*Standalone questions on current affairs, static GK, vocabulary in context and idiom usage. No passage required.*

**21. In Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023), the Supreme Court of India held that, until Parliament legislates otherwise:**

◯ **A.** The Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners shall be appointed by the President on the advice of a COMMITTEE comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India

◯ **B.** The Chief Election Commissioner shall be appointed by the Council of Ministers alone

◯ **C.** The Election Commissioners shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha

◯ **D.** All appointments to the Election Commission shall require ratification by the Rajya Sabha

**22. Choose the word CLOSEST in meaning to: 'recalcitrant'.**

◯ **A.** Cooperative

◯ **B.** Stubbornly resistant to authority or control

◯ **C.** Hesitant

◯ **D.** Cheerful

**23. The idiom 'to throw down the gauntlet' MOST NEARLY means:**

◯ **A.** To surrender unconditionally

◯ **B.** To discard an old garment

◯ **C.** To politely decline an invitation

◯ **D.** To deliver an open challenge or invitation to contest

**24. Under the Constitution, the power to make laws with respect to a matter enumerated in the Concurrent List is conferred on:**

◯ **A.** BOTH Parliament AND the State Legislatures, subject to the rule of repugnancy in Article 254 by which Central law prevails over inconsistent State law (save for State law that has received Presidential assent)

◯ **B.** Parliament alone

◯ **C.** The State Legislatures alone

◯ **D.** The President acting on advice of the Council of Ministers