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.
Free daily practice — clatgurukul.com/daily · Pass this sheet to a friend.

PASSAGE 1 (RC) — ARROW'S IMPOSSIBILITY THEOREM AND THE MATHEMATICS OF VOTING PARADOXES (MATHEMATICS / POLITICAL THEORY) Q1–5

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

When the economist Kenneth Arrow proved, in 1951, that no voting system can simultaneously satisfy a small list of seemingly innocuous fairness conditions, the immediate response in political theory was puzzled silence followed by decades of attempted escape. The theorem says, in plain language, that whenever there are three or more options and three or more voters, NO method of aggregating individual rank-ordered preferences into a single collective ranking can satisfy ALL of the following: unanimity (if all voters prefer X to Y, the group does too), non-dictatorship (no single voter's preferences determine the outcome regardless of others), and independence of irrelevant alternatives (the group's ranking of X versus Y should not change because of how voters rank some third option Z).

The theorem is not a counsel of despair. Earlier mathematical puzzles — Condorcet's eighteenth-century paradox, in which majority preferences over three candidates can cycle (A beats B, B beats C, C beats A) — had already hinted at the difficulty. Arrow's contribution was to show that the difficulty is structural, not a quirk of particular voting rules. Any sufficiently rich preference space generates the same impossibility.

What changes after Arrow is the question we ask of voting systems. The honest question is no longer 'which system is fair?' (none is, in Arrow's sense) but 'which TRADE-OFFS are we prepared to make, and which manipulations are we prepared to tolerate?'. A system that satisfies independence of irrelevant alternatives may permit a candidate ranked first by a majority to lose because of split votes; a system that satisfies the majority criterion may produce cycles. Each design embodies a normative choice masked as a technical one.

The applied lesson is sobering. Reforms in electoral system design — moving from plurality voting to ranked-choice, from ranked-choice to approval voting — should be argued for on the basis of the TRADE-OFFS they make, not on the basis that they achieve a non-existent ideal. Designers who promise a system free of paradox promise more than mathematics allows.

1. Which of the following BEST captures Arrow's theorem, as described in the passage?

◯ **A.** When there are three or more options and three or more voters, NO method of aggregating rank-ordered preferences can simultaneously satisfy unanimity, non-dictatorship, AND independence of irrelevant alternatives
◯ **B.** Any voting system can be rigged by a sufficiently determined minority
◯ **C.** Majority rule is the only legitimate aggregation method
◯ **D.** Ranked-choice voting is provably superior to plurality voting

2. The author cites the Condorcet paradox PRIMARILY to:

◯ **A.** Suggest that the difficulty Arrow proved was foreshadowed by earlier mathematical puzzles, and that Arrow's contribution was to show the difficulty is STRUCTURAL, not a quirk of any particular rule
◯ **B.** Argue that voting is impossible in democracies of large size
◯ **C.** Recommend an immediate return to direct (non-representative) democracy
◯ **D.** Show that majority preferences are always coherent

3. Which of the following is a HIDDEN ASSUMPTION the author's argument MOST RELIES on in the third paragraph?

◯ **A.** All voters are equally informed
◯ **B.** Voters always vote sincerely
◯ **C.** There exist real-world voting designs that DO embody the trade-offs the author describes — i.e., the abstract impossibility result has concrete operational counterparts in which the trade-offs can in fact be observed
◯ **D.** Voting systems are not affected by campaign finance

4. Suppose a reformer argues: 'We should adopt ranked-choice voting because it eliminates the unfairness of plurality voting.' Which is the author's MOST PROBABLE response, given the passage?

◯ **A.** Strong agreement — ranked-choice voting is the fair method
◯ **B.** Strong disagreement — plurality voting is in fact superior
◯ **C.** Indifference — the issue is not amenable to argument
◯ **D.** Sympathetic but corrective — ranked-choice voting embodies a DIFFERENT trade-off (e.g., may produce non-monotonic outcomes); the reformer should defend the trade-off, not claim a non-existent ideal of paradox-freeness

5. The author's overall tone toward attempts to design 'perfect' voting systems is BEST described as:

◯ **A.** Enthusiastic — better mathematics will eventually produce a paradox-free system
◯ **B.** Cynical — all voting is irreparably broken
◯ **C.** Reformist but realist — reform must proceed by HONEST acknowledgment of the trade-offs each design makes; promises of a paradox-free system promise more than mathematics allows
◯ **D.** Indifferent to the design question

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — CENTRAL BANK INDEPENDENCE AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MONETARY POLICY (ECONOMICS / GOVERNANCE) Q6–10

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

NAME: _____ **ROLL NO:** _____ **BATCH:** _____

The case for central bank independence rests on a particular reading of the inflationary record of the post-war period. In economies where monetary policy was conducted under tight political control — typically with the central bank as an arm of the finance ministry — inflation tended to be higher and more volatile than in economies that delegated rate-setting to a politically insulated authority. The intellectual case was sharpened by Kydland and Prescott's work on TIME-INCONSISTENCY: a government that announces low inflation may, when election approaches, have an incentive to engineer a short-term monetary stimulus; the public, anticipating this, builds expectations of higher inflation into wages and prices. Independence is, on this view, a CREDIBILITY DEVICE — a binding precommitment that the polity itself cannot easily reverse.

The Reserve Bank of India's transition to a more formally independent footing arrived later than the comparable transitions at the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank. The Monetary Policy Committee, formalised in 2016 with three RBI members and three external members, and the explicit inflation-targeting mandate (4% with a 2-6% band), institutionalised much of the technical apparatus that the older system had operated only by convention. The change was substantive: inflation expectations, on most measures, anchored more securely after the framework was formalised.

The ARGUMENT FOR independence, however, is not the same as an argument for the central bank's INSULATION from democratic accountability. A central bank that controls a major lever of macroeconomic policy must be accountable; what independence requires is that the accountability be EX POST rather than EX ANTE — that the central bank explain its decisions and submit to parliamentary scrutiny, not that politicians override its rate decisions in real time.

Recent developments — particularly the macro-prudential and exchange-rate dimensions of central banking — have complicated the picture. A pure inflation-targeting mandate may understate the central bank's wider stabilisation role; coordination with fiscal authorities, while preserving operational independence on interest rates, is a question more sophisticated than the original case for independence acknowledged. The best modern statements treat independence not as an absolute but as a designed allocation of decisions: rate-setting protected from short-term political control, broader stabilisation choices coordinated with elected authorities, and accountability discharged through transparent reasoning.

6. What is the author's PRIMARY argument about central bank independence?

◯ **A.** Independence is desirable for INFLATION-control reasons (credibility against time-inconsistent political incentives) but should be designed alongside, NOT instead of, democratic ex post accountability
◯ **B.** Central banks should be insulated from all democratic oversight
◯ **C.** Central banks should be folded back into finance ministries
◯ **D.** Inflation targeting is no longer relevant

7. The Kydland-Prescott time-inconsistency argument, as the author uses it, functions to:

◯ **A.** Establish that politicians are inherently dishonest
◯ **B.** Establish that independent central banks always produce zero inflation
◯ **C.** Provide the THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING for why politically insulated rate-setting is a credibility device — public expectations anticipate political incentives, and independence binds the polity against its own short-term temptation
◯ **D.** Argue against inflation targeting as a framework

8. Which of the following positions does the author MOST CONSISTENTLY hold across the passage?

◯ **A.** Independence is an absolute good
◯ **B.** Independence is an absolute evil
◯ **C.** Independence is a DESIGNED ALLOCATION — rate-setting protected, broader stabilisation coordinated, accountability discharged ex post — not a binary 'in or out' question
◯ **D.** Independence is irrelevant in middle-income economies

9. Which is a HIDDEN ASSUMPTION the author RELIES ON in attributing post-2016 inflation-expectation anchoring to the Monetary Policy Committee's formalisation?

◯ **A.** That FACTORS OTHER THAN the formalisation — global oil prices, exchange-rate movements, domestic demand cycles — did not themselves substantially produce the anchoring; otherwise the post-2016 anchoring is partly or wholly attributable to factors unrelated to MPC formalisation
◯ **B.** Inflation expectations were perfectly measured before 2016
◯ **C.** Indian inflation was solely caused by political pressure on the RBI
◯ **D.** The 2-6% band is the only optimal band

10. If a reformer were to ARGUE that 'central bank independence has gone too far and the RBI should be made directly answerable to the Prime Minister for rate decisions', the author's MOST PROBABLE response is:

◯ **A.** Strong agreement — democratic control is the only legitimate model
◯ **B.** Indifference — the issue is technical
◯ **C.** Strong disagreement that confounds independence with non-accountability — the author would distinguish ex post parliamentary accountability (which he supports) from ex ante political override of rate decisions (which he treats as defeating the credibility device)
◯ **D.** Strong agreement provided the Prime Minister is an economist

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — CAPPING POLITICAL PARTY DONATIONS POST-ELECTORAL-BONDS (CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM / PUBLIC POLICY) Q11–15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11–15.

Following the Supreme Court's February 2024 judgement striking down the electoral-bonds scheme, the political-finance regime in India is in flux. The proposal advanced here is narrower than restoring the pre-bonds regime: Parliament should legislate a STATUTORY ANNUAL CAP on aggregate donations to any single political party — say, 0.5% of the party's previous-year audited income or a fixed floor amount, whichever is higher — accompanied by mandatory real-time disclosure of all donations above ₹20,000.

Three arguments support the proposal. First, the electoral-bonds scheme failed because anonymity at the donor-recipient interface enabled, at scale, a concentration of political finance in the hands of large corporate donors. The Supreme Court's 2024 judgement specifically identified this concentration risk. A statutory cap directly addresses the concentration, while real-time disclosure addresses the anonymity. The two interventions complement each other; neither alone is sufficient.

Second, the proposal preserves the FREEDOM TO DONATE — which is constitutionally protected as an aspect of political expression under Article 19(1)(a) (as the Court itself acknowledged in 2024) — by setting a CAP rather than a prohibition. A donor may still contribute; the contribution simply may not exceed the cap. This is a proportionate response to the concentration problem, distinct from outright prohibition that would face stronger constitutional challenge.

Third, the cap-plus-disclosure design is administratively feasible. The Election Commission already maintains the audited-income database; the cap can be computed and communicated to parties at the start of each fiscal year. Real-time disclosure requires technological infrastructure but builds on existing electronic-filing systems. Comparable democracies — Canada, France, Germany — operate cap-plus-disclosure regimes with established compliance mechanisms.

Two objections deserve engagement. The CIRCUMVENTION objection — that donors will use proxies, shell entities and unreported channels — is real but addressable through statutory penalties for circumvention, beneficial-ownership disclosure norms and audit-trail requirements. The PARTY-FUND-CRUNCH objection — that smaller parties dependent on a few large donors will be disproportionately harmed — has merit; the proposal therefore retains the fixed floor amount, calibrated to allow small parties to meet baseline operational expenses irrespective of audited income.

11. What is the MAIN CONCLUSION of the argument?

◯ **A.** The pre-electoral-bonds regime should be restored without modification
◯ **B.** All political donations should be prohibited
◯ **C.** Parliament should legislate a STATUTORY ANNUAL CAP on aggregate donations to any single political party (set at 0.5% of previous-year audited income or a floor, whichever is higher), accompanied by mandatory real-time disclosure above ₹20,000
◯ **D.** Only state funding of parties should be permitted

12. Consider the following argument: 'Many infrastructure failures occur because builders fail to follow safety regulations. Therefore, governments should require all builders to attend safety training before issuing licenses.' Which of the author's premises is PARALLEL in structure (problem → identified cause → targeted intervention against that cause) to this builders argument?

◯ **A.** The second argument — about constitutional protection of donation freedom
◯ **B.** The response to the party-fund-crunch objection
◯ **C.** The third argument — about administrative feasibility
◯ **D.** The first argument — diagnosing concentration of political finance via anonymity, then prescribing cap + real-time disclosure as targeted interventions against the diagnosed cause

13. Which of the following, if true, MUST be true in the context of the author's second argument (freedom to donate)?

◯ **A.** Article 19(1)(a) protects only individual citizens, not corporate donors
◯ **B.** The Election Commission has no role in donation regulation
◯ **C.** All political donations must be in cash
◯ **D.** Outright prohibition of donations would, on the author's framing, face a STRONGER constitutional challenge than a calibrated CAP — because a cap leaves the freedom to donate intact while regulating quantum, whereas a prohibition extinguishes the freedom altogether

14. Which would STRENGTHEN the author's argument EXCEPT?

◯ **A.** Empirical evidence that Canada's cap-plus-disclosure regime has reduced finance concentration without harming small parties
◯ **B.** Detailed analysis showing the proposed floor amount is adequate to meet small-party baseline expenses
◯ **C.** Evidence that compliance technology for real-time disclosure works at the scale of Indian political donations
◯ **D.** Evidence that POST-ELECTORAL-BONDS, large corporate donors have ALREADY MIGRATED to unreported channels in jurisdictions that adopted cap-plus-disclosure, with finance concentration UNCHANGED

15. Which is a PARALLEL FLAW that one MIGHT (mistakenly) attribute to the author's first argument?

◯ **A.** It begs the question by assuming what it sets out to prove
◯ **B.** It commits the GENETIC FALLACY (criticising the bonds scheme on the basis of its political-finance origin rather than its operational record); on inspection the argument relies on the OPERATIONAL RECORD (the 2024 judgement's findings on concentration) and not on the scheme's origin, so the parallel flaw does not in fact apply
◯ **C.** It is circular
◯ **D.** It appeals to authority alone

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — SHOULD THE RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN OVERRIDE PRESS FREEDOM? (PRIVACY / FREE SPEECH) Q16–20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

The 'right to be forgotten' — a person's claim to have lawful but stale or harmful information about themselves de-indexed by search engines or removed from publicly accessible databases — has been recognised in EU jurisprudence since the 2014 Google Spain judgement and was acknowledged, in qualified form, by the Supreme Court of India in Puttaswamy (2017) and in subsequent High Court decisions. The proposal advanced here is the negative case: a statutory right to be forgotten should NOT, except in narrow circumstances, override press freedom and the public's interest in accessing journalistic archives.

Three arguments support this conclusion. First, the press function depends on archival integrity. Journalistic work — particularly investigative reporting on financial crime, public-office misconduct and judicial proceedings — derives its evidential value from its persistence in the public record. A right that permitted subjects of past reporting to require de-indexing on the ground that they had since 'moved on' would systematically erode the archive that future scrutiny depends on.

Second, the proportionality test in Puttaswamy itself requires that any infringement of free speech be NECESSARY and PROPORTIONATE to a legitimate state interest. The interest in protecting individual privacy is legitimate; but de-indexing or removal of accurate, lawfully published reporting is rarely necessary where the harm to the individual can be addressed by less restrictive means — clarifications, follow-up reporting, contextual annotations — that preserve the public record.

Third, the targeting problem is acute. The right would, in practice, be exercised most by individuals with the resources to pursue it — corporate actors, public figures, and litigation-financed claimants — and not by the ordinary persons whose privacy concerns the EU framework imagined. The structural effect would be the privatised censorship of journalism by those most capable of bringing the claim.

Two objections deserve engagement. The CONVICTION-AND-REHABILITATION objection — that persons convicted of historic offences who have served their sentences should not be perpetually defined by old reporting — has merit, and the proposal therefore CARVES OUT a narrow exception for spent convictions analogous to the UK Rehabilitation of Offenders Act framework. The PRIVATE-INDIVIDUAL objection — that ordinary persons caught up in events not of their making (witnesses, victims, accident-bystanders) should not be permanently identifiable — also has merit and is similarly carved out where the individual is not a public figure and the reporting does not concern matters of continuing public interest.

16. What is the MAIN CONCLUSION of the argument?

◯ **A.** The right to be forgotten should be abolished in all circumstances
◯ **B.** A statutory right to be forgotten should NOT, except in NARROW circumstances (spent convictions; certain non-public individuals in matters lacking continuing public interest), override press freedom and the public's archival interest
◯ **C.** Press freedom is absolute and admits no exceptions
◯ **D.** Search engines should not be regulated at all

17. Which of the following, if true, MUST be true given the author's argument about archival integrity?

◯ **A.** All journalism is investigative
◯ **B.** If subjects of historic reporting can ROUTINELY require de-indexing, then the evidential and accountability value of journalistic archives is systematically diminished for the future scrutiny that the archives' persistence enables — an inference that follows directly from the author's premise about journalism's dependence on archival persistence
◯ **C.** Search engines have no editorial responsibility
◯ **D.** Privacy is not a constitutional value in India

18. Consider the following argument: 'Many medical procedures cause some patient harm. Therefore, all medical procedures should be banned.' This argument commits a FLAW. Which of the following arguments BY THE AUTHOR shares the same flaw structure (correctly extrapolating from one feature to a sweeping conclusion)?

◯ **A.** The first argument (archival integrity) — but on inspection, the author CAREFULLY LIMITS the conclusion (no sweeping claim that no de-indexing is ever appropriate; narrow carve-outs are explicit) so the parallel flaw DOES NOT actually apply
◯ **B.** The second argument (proportionality)
◯ **C.** The third argument (targeting problem)
◯ **D.** All three primary arguments share the flaw

19. Which would STRENGTHEN the author's third argument (targeting problem) EXCEPT?

◯ **A.** Empirical data from EU jurisdictions showing that 80%+ of right-to-be-forgotten claims are filed by corporate entities or high-net-worth individuals, not by ordinary private persons
◯ **B.** Evidence that, under existing EU practice, the cost of pursuing a de-indexing claim systematically exceeds the means of ordinary claimants
◯ **C.** Evidence that journalists report a documented 'chilling effect' on archival reporting in jurisdictions that have adopted broad right-to-be-forgotten frameworks
◯ **D.** Evidence that EU search engines have built efficient, low-cost claims-handling channels that ordinary private individuals access at high rates without legal representation

20. Which inference about the author's view CAN be drawn from the carve-outs the author concedes (spent convictions; private individuals not of continuing public interest)?

◯ **A.** The author actually agrees with a broad right to be forgotten
◯ **B.** The author treats press freedom as the DEFAULT but recognises it has limits at the margins — the carve-outs are calibrated exceptions that PRESERVE the default while addressing the most compelling counter-cases, consistent with the proportionality framework
◯ **C.** The author thinks press freedom is unimportant
◯ **D.** The author wants all journalism to be anonymised

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 Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992), the Supreme Court held that reservations in services should not exceed which ceiling, save in extraordinary circumstances?

◯ **A.** 33%
◯ **B.** 50%
◯ **C.** 60%
◯ **D.** 75%

22. Choose the word OPPOSITE in meaning to: 'taciturn'.

◯ **A.** Garrulous (talkative, especially about trivial matters)
◯ **B.** Silent
◯ **C.** Reserved
◯ **D.** Sullen

23. Identify the GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT sentence:

◯ **A.** Neither the judge nor the lawyers was satisfied with the verdict.
◯ **B.** Neither the judge nor the lawyers were satisfied with the verdict.
◯ **C.** Neither the judge or the lawyers were satisfied with the verdict.
◯ **D.** Neither the judge nor the lawyers is satisfied with the verdict.

24. Under the Constitution, the power to make laws on a matter NOT enumerated in any of the three Lists in the Seventh Schedule (residuary subjects) is vested in:

◯ **A.** The State Legislatures concurrently
◯ **B.** PARLIAMENT alone, by virtue of Article 248 read with Entry 97 of the Union List
◯ **C.** The President of India acting under Article 123
◯ **D.** The Concurrent List by default