

ANSWER KEY – 14 MAY 2026

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

RC PASSAGES

Q1 B

Paragraph 2 of the passage explicitly contrasts the Indian recall-driven examination model with making, stating that making 'inverts the grammar' of recall and produces 'tolerance for ambiguity, comfort with failure, willingness to redesign' — cognitive styles the existing model 'rarely cultivates'. Option (B) captures this directly. Option (A) overstates the claim — the author does not say maker culture replaces the system. Option (C) is unsupported. Option (D) inverts the position. Answer: (B).

Q2 B

The final paragraph opens with 'Sceptics raise two objections worth taking seriously' and goes on to concede 'Both points are correct' before defending the deeper claim. That is the textbook structure of a CONCESSION — accepting the objections as accurate while maintaining the broader thesis. Option (A) is wrong because the author does not reject the objections. Option (C) is wrong on tone — there is no hostility. Option (D) is wrong — the author engages substantively. Answer: (B).

Q3 A

The author's structural claim has three operative components: (i) widespread distribution of fabrication capability, (ii) reach beyond the formal institutional academy, and (iii) diffusion into towns and smaller cities. Option (A) attacks all three simultaneously — showing that distribution is minimal (fewer than 0.1% scale), reach is hollow (well-resourced schools only), and diffusion is illusory (capability captured by a few urban centres). That is the maximally weakening counter-evidence. Option (B) — modest expansion of labs — is consistent with the author's view. Options (C) and (D) are too narrow or irrelevant. Answer: (A).

Q4 B

The final paragraph contrasts a citizen 'whose intellectual habits are formed by asking questions of the physical world' with one 'whose habits are formed by recall of solved problems'. The phrase 'a different kind of citizen' refers to this contrast in intellectual habits. Option (B) captures the meaning exactly. Option (A) treats 'different' as nationality — a category mistake. Option (C) — exemption from exams — is unsupported. Option (D) narrows the meaning to a profession, which the author does not specify. Answer: (B).

Q5 B

The author endorses maker culture on pedagogical and structural grounds (paragraphs 2 and 3), but also acknowledges that sceptics 'raise two objections worth taking seriously' and 'Both points are correct' (paragraph 4). This is the texture of CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM — endorsement tempered by acknowledged limits. Option (A) is too strong — the author flags real concerns. Option (C) inverts the stance. Option (D) is wrong — the author takes a clear normative position. Answer: (B).

Q6 B

Paragraph 2 of the passage explicitly weighs the named culprits. It dismisses mobile-tower radiation as 'weakly supported' on present evidence. It states that pesticide drift, particularly neonicotinoids, has been implicated 'more robustly' because sparrows are highly sensitive to neuroactive compounds and surveys correlate the decline with pesticide-intensive agricultural belts. That is the most robustly supported cause in the passage. Option (A) is the explicitly downgraded culprit. Options (C) climate change and (D) introduced-species predation are not in the passage. Answer: (B).

Q7 B

The final paragraph generalises beyond the sparrow: 'What its absence tells us is that the everyday urban ecosystem that made room for sparrows also made room for human beings.' The author concludes that the same architectural and civic transformation of the city has hollowed out a habitat for humans alongside birds. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) is too pessimistic — the author cites recovery examples. Option (C) overstates the policy implication. Option (D) trivialises a passage that treats the sparrow as a sentinel species. Answer: (B).

Q8 C

In ecology and environmental science, a 'sentinel species' is a species whose health, population status or physiological response serves to indicate the broader condition of an ecosystem — much like a canary in a coalmine served as an early warning of dangerous gas levels for miners. The author of the passage uses this phrase to indicate that the sparrow's decline serves as an EARLY WARNING signal of deeper ecological and architectural transformations underway in Indian cities. Option (C) captures this scientific usage exactly. Option (A) literalises the word 'sentinel' into the idea of active guarding, which the term does not mean in ecological vocabulary. Option (B) invents a fictitious legal regime around the word. Option (D) misreads the term as referring to aggressive territorial behaviour. Answer: (C).

Q9 B

Paragraph 3 describes conservation responses as 'imaginative but small in scale'. The author cites concrete successes (Bandra nest boxes producing measurable recovery, Bangalore and Pune bird-feeders, Tamil Nadu Forest Department's monitoring training) while noting their limited scale relative to the national problem. This is measured appreciation — neither cheerleading nor dismissal. Option (B) captures this exactly. Option (A) is wrong on tone — the author is not sarcastic. Option (C) is too enthusiastic — scale limits are flagged. Option (D) is wrong — outright pessimism contradicts the author's noted recoveries. Answer: (B).

Q10 A

The author's claim has two components: (i) civic action HAS produced recovery in localities where it operates, and (ii) the formal regulatory apparatus has not produced comparable recovery. Option (A) provides a controlled comparison — same outcome measure (population recovery) across two intervention types (volunteer programmes versus government directives) — which is precisely the type of evidence that would establish the relative effectiveness claim. Option (B) is too narrow (single suburb). Options (C) and (D) are tangential. Answer: (A).

CR PASSAGES

Q11 B

The proposal in paragraph 1 is carefully and narrowly framed: cryptocurrencies remain entirely lawful for qualified institutional investors who meet minimum-net-worth and disclosure thresholds, but RETAIL participation — the buying of cryptocurrencies by ordinary Indian savers through online exchanges — is to be prohibited. The remainder of the passage defends this narrow proposal across three observations. Option (B) captures the proposal accurately. Option (A) overstates the ban as universal — institutional access is explicitly preserved. Option (C) is the position the author is arguing against. Option (D) is unrelated to the proposal. Answer: (B).

Q12 A

Paragraph 3 argues that cryptocurrencies serve no settled productive purpose in the Indian economy. The argument implicitly assumes that productive purpose is a RELEVANT criterion for whether a retail investment should be permitted — if it were irrelevant (purely speculative assets being a matter of consumer choice), the productivity observation would not bear on the conclusion. Option (A) makes this unstated assumption explicit. Options (B) through (D) are not premises the argument requires. Answer: (A).

Q13 A

The author rests the proposal on three operative observations: (i) retail returns have been dismal; (ii) cryptocurrencies serve no settled productive purpose; (iii) regulatory machinery is largely absent and capital migrates offshore. Option (A) attacks all three simultaneously with peer-reviewed counter-evidence: better median returns than equities; decoupling from risk assets and outperformance of inflation; effective limit on offshore migration. That is the maximally weakening rebuttal. Options (B) through (D) touch only tangential considerations. Answer: (A).

Q14 B

The author addresses the autonomy defence directly: 'their own' is doing a great deal of work, because the mistakes are 'systematically engineered by advertising designed to exploit predictable behavioural biases'. This is a challenge to the AUTONOMY framing itself — not an emotional plea, not a constitutional argument, not an analogy to commodity markets. Option (B) captures the move. Answer: (B).

Q15 A

The defence treats autonomous investor choice as the operative concept. The author identifies the FLAW: this treatment ignores the systematic behavioural engineering — the advertising machine designed to exploit predictable cognitive biases — that shapes the very choices being labelled autonomous. Option (A) captures the flaw exactly. Option (B) — citation of authority — is irrelevant. Option (C) — technology — is unrelated. Option (D) inverts the analogy. Answer: (A).

Q16 B

Paragraph 1 sets out the proposal: the existing public-sector reservation regime should be extended by statute to private-sector hiring in firms above a defined size threshold, at appropriately calibrated quotas. The rest of the passage defends this against three objections. Option (B) states the proposal accurately. Option (A) is the position the author rejects. Option (C) is the current status quo. Option (D) is fabricated. Answer: (B).

Q17 A

Paragraph 2 argues that adding affirmative-action regulation to the existing thick regulatory stack is 'a matter of degree, not of principle'. This argument rests on the unstated premise that adding a similar regulatory layer to existing layers does not, in itself, abolish autonomy operationally. If autonomy collapsed at any marginal addition, the comparison to existing labour-welfare, disability-accommodation and equal-remuneration rules would not work. Option (A) makes the premise explicit. The other options are not assumptions the argument requires. Answer: (A).

Q18 A

The author rests the case on three operative claims: (i) productivity costs are modest, (ii) baseline discrimination (resume-audit callback differentials of 30%+) is large, and (iii) perceived 'reservation-hire' stigma dissipates in the first year. Option (A) directly contradicts all three — large sustained productivity losses, negligible callback differentials, and persistent stigma. That is the maximally weakening counter-evidence. The other options touch tangential matters. Answer: (A).

Q19 B

Paragraph 4 addresses stigmatisation by citing empirical work (Deshpande 2017; Bhalotra and Clots-Figueras 2014) showing the effect is concentrated in the first year and dissipates with direct observation of performance. It then POINTS TO the documented baseline discrimination (resume-audit callback differentials of 30%+) as a larger competing stigma. Option (B) captures this empirical reframing. Option (A) is wrong — the author concedes stigmatisation can occur. Option (C) is fabricated. Option (D) mischaracterises the tone. Answer: (B).

Q20 B

The author's rhetorical architecture is clearly: (i) name three principal objections (autonomy, hiring costs, stigmatisation), (ii) address each with comparable-context evidence and empirical citation, and (iii) reframe the most serious objection (stigmatisation) as a choice between two forms of stigma rather than stigma versus its absence. Option (B) captures this structure precisely. The other options misdescribe the approach. Answer: (B).

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21 C

The capital of New Zealand is Wellington, located at the southern tip of the North Island. Auckland is the largest city by population but has never been the federal capital after Wellington was selected in 1865 (replacing Auckland as the capital). Christchurch is the largest city on the South Island. Hamilton is a major inland city on the North Island. Option (C) Wellington is correct.

Q22 B

The 2024 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Nihon Hidankyo — the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations — a long-standing grass-roots movement of atomic bomb survivors (hibakusha) from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 'for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never again be used'. Narges Mohammadi, the Iranian human rights activist, won the 2023 Peace Prize. The World Food Programme won in 2020. Ressa and Muratov, the journalists, shared the prize in 2021. Only Nihon Hidankyo corresponds to the 2024 award. Answer: (B) Nihon Hidankyo.

Q23 B

Mission Karmayogi, launched by the Government of India in September 2020, is the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB). It rolls out the iGOT-Karmayogi digital learning platform, designed to enable a continuous, role-based and competency-driven learning experience for civil servants working across Central, State and local Government tiers. The Mission is governed by a Public Human Resources Council chaired by the Prime Minister himself and is supported by a Capacity Building Commission. The other options describe unrelated welfare or infrastructure programmes; Mission Karmayogi is exclusively about civil-service capacity building. Answer: (B) Capacity-building of civil servants.

Q24 B

In *Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India* (2024), a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India unanimously held that the Electoral Bond Scheme (introduced in 2018) was unconstitutional, violating the right to information under Article 19(1)(a). The Court directed the State Bank of India to disclose donor and recipient details to the Election Commission of India, which subsequently published the data. The Court rejected the Government's defence that donor privacy justified the opacity. Answer: (B).

Q25 B

'Ephemeral' is an adjective meaning lasting for a very short time — fleeting, momentary, or transient. The Greek root word literally means 'lasting only one day'. The word is frequently used to describe short-lived pleasures, brief weather phenomena, and limited-duration experiences. Its closest synonym among the options is 'transient', which also means lasting only a short time. 'Lasting' is the direct antonym of ephemeral. 'Profound' and 'significant' describe depth or importance, not duration, and are unrelated. Answer: (B) Transient.

Q26 B

The idiom 'to bite the bullet' originates from battlefield surgery before anaesthesia, when soldiers were given a bullet to bite on to endure the pain of an operation. By extension, the idiom means to face an unpleasant or difficult situation with courage and determination — to do something that has to be done despite its difficulty. Option (A) literalises the phrase. Option (C) is unrelated. Option (D) misreads the meaning. Answer: (B).

Q27 A

'Come to' (a conclusion) is the standard phrasal verb in English for reaching or arriving at a conclusion or realisation. It fits the sentence: 'she could not come to the conclusion that he was lying'. 'Look forward to' means to anticipate eagerly. 'Put up with' means to tolerate. 'Give in to' means to surrender to or yield. Only 'come to' fits the meaning of arriving at a conclusion. Answer: (A).

Q28 B

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression — one of the six freedoms in the original Article 19, subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2). Freedom of religion is protected by Articles 25 to 28. Freedom from exploitation is under Articles 23 and 24. Freedom of association is Article 19(1)(c). Answer: (B) Freedom of speech and expression.

Q29 C

K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) was a nine-judge Constitution Bench decision of the Supreme Court that unanimously held that the right to privacy is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution. The judgment overruled M.P. Sharma (1954) and Kharak Singh (1962) to the extent those decisions denied privacy as a fundamental right. Selvi (2010) dealt with narco-analysis and brain-mapping in criminal investigations. Answer: (C) K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017).

Q30 B

The 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction was awarded to Jayne Anne Phillips for 'Night Watch', a novel set in the aftermath of the American Civil War in a West Virginia asylum, exploring trauma and recovery through three interlinked perspectives. Jennifer Egan won the Pulitzer in 2011 for 'A Visit from the Goon Squad'. Hernan Diaz won in 2023 for 'Trust'. Joshua Cohen won in 2022 for 'The Netanyahus'. Answer: (B) Jayne Anne Phillips.