

ANSWER KEY – 16 MAY 2026

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

RC PASSAGES

Q1 A

Paragraph 3 introduces the DISTRIBUTIONAL story (organised losers, particularly tax practitioners, vs diffuse beneficiaries — small business and the salaried individual) as the deeper cause of reform paralysis that the institutional-veto account in paragraph 2 cannot fully explain. The paragraph EXPLICITLY says 'the deeper story is DISTRIBUTIONAL'. Option (B) captures this exactly. Option (A) misreads the paragraph as restating rather than deepening. Option (C) overstates — the paragraph diagnoses, it does not recommend a specific package. Option (D) misses the analytical point — the criticism is structural, not personal. Answer: (A) the second option.

Q2 C

Paragraph 4 identifies two paths to unblock the deadlock. The FIRST is procedural — 'designing tax-reform proposals as PACKAGES that compensate the organised losers with transitional measures'. A future government's actual proposal of compensating tax practitioners and large firms with transitional measures would directly engage and TEST this first procedural path. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) is unrelated to the proposed package. Option (C) is a background observation, not the engaged claim. Option (D) is the conclusion the proposal would test, but the proposal engages the procedural path FIRST. Answer: (C) the second option.

Q3 A

The author's tone toward the institutional-veto thesis is CONCEDED but QUALIFIED. Paragraph 2 explicitly says 'this is part of the story but only part' — accepting the descriptive accuracy while signalling that the deeper distributional dynamic in paragraph 3 captures what the institutional-veto account misses. Option (B) precisely captures this. Option (A) overstates rejection. Option (C) overstates endorsement. Option (D) is wrong — the author is engaged, not indifferent. Answer: (A) the second option.

Q4 B

Read the surrounding sentence: 'the organised losers successfully block reform... it is a coordination failure of unequal political weight'. The phrase explicitly contrasts STUPIDITY (which is what the author rejects) with UNEQUAL POLITICAL WEIGHT (which the author identifies). The diffuse beneficiaries are large in number but politically weak; the organised losers are small in number but politically strong. The 'failure' is one of unequal weight, not unequal intelligence. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) literalises 'coordination' too narrowly. Option (C) overstates as a universal claim. Option (D) absurdly interprets 'weight'. Answer: (B) the second option.

Q5 B

The GST experience described in paragraph 1 — 'a continuous accretion of rate slabs, exemptions, classifications and Central-State carve-outs' — illustrates that even a reform that PASSES can, through incremental accretion, end up reproducing the complexity it was meant to remove. The inference best supported by this account is option (B): passage alone is not sufficient for genuine simplification. Option (A) — full repeal — is unsupported. Option (C) — reduced collection efficiency — is not in the passage. Option (D) — replacement by State sales tax — is unsupported. Answer: (B) the second option.

Q6 A

The author's primary thesis, set out in paragraph 4 and reinforced in the conclusion, is that Indian English will STRATIFY into an internationally-intelligible register and an indigenised domestic register. Competent speakers will move between them as they already do between formal and informal Hindi or Tamil. Option (C) captures this thesis. Option (A) — replacement by Hindi — is contradicted by the author's claim that Indian English will 'manifestly survive'. Option (B) — convergence on British English — is exactly what the author predicts will NOT happen. Option (D) — collapse under indigenisation — is the opposite extreme. Answer: (A) the third option.

Q7 B

These three features — the 'isn't it?' tag, the perfective 'I have done it yesterday', and 'like-like' doubling — are presented in paragraph 3 as concrete EXAMPLES of indigenisation features that have been ACCEPTED AS STANDARD WITHIN INDIA even though they remain non-standard internationally. The function is illustrative, not evaluative or prescriptive. Option (B) captures this exactly. Option (A) — mocking — is a grave misreading of the author's neutral linguistic stance. Option (C) — 'incorrect' — is what the author explicitly avoids saying. Option (D) — disappearing under standardisation — is the opposite of the author's claim about register accommodation. Answer: (B) the second option.

Q8 D

The author predicts a STRATIFICATION — an internationally-intelligible register and an indigenised domestic register, with bilingual-style competence between the two. The closest analogy in another linguistic context is Modern Standard Arabic and the colloquial Arabics, where speakers move between a high register for cross-regional and formal communication and colloquial registers for daily life. Option (B) captures this analogy precisely (this is the classical phenomenon of DIGLOSSIA). Option (A) Latin and Italian is not analogous — Latin is dead. Option (C) British vs Cockney is a class dialect, not a register stratification. Option (D) English and French are entirely separate languages. Answer: (D) the second option.

Q9 B

The author's prediction of stratification rests on the claim that competent speakers will MAINTAIN the register distinction. Option (A) provides exactly the kind of evidence that would undermine this: speakers consistently FAIL to maintain register distinctions, indigenised features bleed into formal cross-border contexts, and the international register fails to take hold inside Indian domestic communication. If true, this would mean stratification is not happening — the two registers are either collapsing into one or one is dominating the other. Options (B), (C) and (D) are tangential to the central stratification claim. Answer: (B) the first option.

Q10 A

The author's stance is that BOTH PRESSURES will be accommodated through register stratification — competent speakers will move fluidly between the two registers. Option (C) captures this exactly. Option (A) misreads as all-standardisation. Option (B) misreads as all-indigenisation. Option (D) — splintering into mutually unintelligible varieties — is what the author explicitly rejects. Only option (C) captures the author's stratification thesis. Answer: (A) the third option.

CR PASSAGES

Q11 B

The proposal in paragraph 1 is precisely framed: PILOT a UBI of approximately ₹1,500 per adult per month in TWO large diverse States, funded by reallocation of named subsidies and modest fiscal reform, with five-year evaluation against control districts. The rest of the passage defends this narrowly framed proposal. Option (B) captures it accurately. Option (A) overstates as immediate national rollout. Option (C) is the position the author argues against. Option (D) is the polar-opposite policy stance. Answer: (B) the second option.

Q12 A

Option (B) provides the most substantial weakening. The author's second observation is supported by Banerjee et al. (Kenya) and the SEWA pilot. Option (B) brings rigorous evidence from a comparable South-Asian middle-income context (more directly applicable to India than Kenya), with sustained effects, multiple studies, AND effects concentrated in the same demographic groups the proposal targets — directly engaging and undermining the labour-force claim. Option (A) is irrelevant. Option (C) is a background fact. Option (D) doesn't engage the labour-force claim. Answer: (A) the second option.

Q13 C

The author's first observation states that direct cash transfers have shown low-single-digit leakage rates 'where digital infrastructure and Aadhaar verification are functional'. The unstated assumption that bridges this to the Indian pilot is that the digital infrastructure AND Aadhaar verification will function reliably across the proposed pilot States. Without this, the cited low-leakage figures do not transfer. Option (B) makes this assumption explicit. Options (A), (C) and (D) are not assumptions the argument requires. Answer: (C) the second option.

Q14 A

Paragraph 4 opens a new dimension — GOVERNANCE REFORM. Removing local-administrator discretion (the tehsildar's ability to withhold benefits on flimsy paperwork) is framed as 'a reform of governance, not just of social policy'. The function of the paragraph is to broaden the argument from leakage and labour to the political economy of discretion. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) misreads as emotional appeal. Option (C) misses the broader analytical point. Option (D) misses the function — the paragraph adds to, rather than replaces, the case. Answer: (A) the second option.

Q15 B

The author's response to the fiscal-cost objection is a specific QUANTITATIVE claim — the cost is approximately 1.5% of GDP, within the envelope freed by phasing the named subsidies. This is paired with an honest acknowledgment that the inflation-pass-through objection is what the pilot is precisely designed to test. Option (B) captures both halves. Option (A) misreads as emotional appeal. Option (C) — a Directive-Principles argument — is not made. Option (D) — dismissal — is wrong; the author engages substantively with both objections. Answer: (B) the second option.

Q16 A

The argument's main conclusion is set in paragraph 1 and calibrated through paragraphs 3-4: lateral entry should be CALIBRATED, CAPPED at a small percentage (~10%) and CONSTITUTIONALLY COMPLIANT (UPSC-administered selection committees), addressing demonstrable knowledge gaps in technical sectors WITHOUT large-scale displacement of the existing recruitment channel. Option (B) captures all three calibrating elements. Option (A) — abolition — is not the author's conclusion. Option (C) — domain experts only — is the unrestricted version the author explicitly rejects. Option (D) — harder UPSC exam — is unrelated. Answer: (A) the second option.

Q17 D

The author's claim is that 'merit is plural' — different roles may legitimately require different aptitude profiles. Option (B) provides a principle that, if accepted, directly defends this: merit is the capacity that BEST PREDICTS performance in the role, and different roles may legitimately require different profiles, so a single recruitment route may capture only one form of merit. Option (A) is the conventional view the author challenges. Option (C) — irrelevance — collapses the policy debate. Option (D) — unmeasurable — is unhelpful. Answer: (D) the second option.

Q18 D

The author engages the incentive-distortion objection by ACCEPTING its force ('this concern deserves engagement') and proposing specific calibrating safeguards — small percentage cap, scarcity-restricted use, anti-re-entry protections — that defuse the worst version while preserving the policy. This is a textbook calibration move. Option (B) captures it. Option (A) — outright rejection — is wrong; the author concedes. Option (C) — dismissal of cadre stability — is the opposite. Option (D) — emotional appeal — is wrong. Answer: (D) the second option.

Q19 D

Option (B) provides the most substantial counter-evidence to the calibration response. The author's calibration rests on the proposition that small caps, scarcity restrictions, and anti-re-entry safeguards adequately address the cadre-stability concern. Documented evidence from comparable common-law democracies showing that EVEN WITH all these calibrating safeguards, lateral entry produces cadre destabilisation, early exits, and loss of institutional memory within five years would directly undermine the calibration response. Options (A), (C) and (D) are tangential. Answer: (D) the second option.

Q20 C

The final paragraph engages the MOST SERIOUS objection — the constitutional one under Article 320 — and provides a PROCEDURAL REPLY: lateral entry positions can be created through UPSC-administered selection committees with domain-expert participation, preserving constitutional form while achieving substantive expertise. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) — unrelated aside — misses the engagement. Option (C) — repealing Article 320 — is the opposite of the author's procedural fidelity. Option (D) — historical claim — misreads the function. Answer: (C) the second option.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21 B

In Re: Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 (decided October 2024), a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India by a 4:1 majority UPHELD the constitutional validity of Section 6A. That provision sets out citizenship rules for migrants from Bangladesh into Assam and was challenged for violating Articles 14, 6 and 7. The Court held the provision constitutional, finding it consistent with the Assam Accord and the special demographic circumstances of the State. Option (A) — striking down — is the opposite of the actual outcome. Options (C) (referral to Parliament) and (D) (postponement) are incorrect. Answer: (B) the second option.

Q22 A

'Lugubrious' is an adjective derived from Latin lugere (to mourn), meaning excessively mournful, gloomy, or dismal — often with a note of exaggeration. Its closest synonym among the options is 'mournful'. Option (A) 'cheerful' is the antonym. Option (C) 'ambiguous' refers to multiple meanings, unrelated. Option (D) 'talkative' describes loquacity, also unrelated. Only 'mournful' captures the specific sad-and-gloomy register of lugubrious. Answer: (A) the second option.

Q23 C

The idiom 'to play devil's advocate' originates from the Roman Catholic Church's process of canonisation, where an official (the advocatus diaboli) was appointed to argue AGAINST a candidate's suitability to test the strength of the case for canonisation. By extension, the idiom means to argue a position one does not necessarily hold, in order to test its strength or expose weaknesses in the opposing view. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) misreads as dishonest argument. Option (C) literalises as defence law. Option (D) misreads as deception. Answer: (C) the second option.

Q24 C

The proviso to Article 368(2) requires ratification by at least one-half of the State legislatures for amendments affecting the FEDERAL STRUCTURE — including the manner of election of the President, the legislative competence distribution (Seventh Schedule entries), and the representation of States in Parliament. Adding a new fundamental DUTY under Article 51A does NOT touch the federal structure — it operates on individual citizens, not on Centre-State relations. Such an amendment can be passed by the ordinary parliamentary supermajority alone. Options (A), (B) and (D) all touch federal-structure questions and require state ratification. Only (C) does not. Answer: (C) the third option.

Q25 B

The official currency of Vietnam is the DONG (international code VND). The Vietnamese Dong has been the country's currency since the reunification of Vietnam in 1976. Option (A) Baht is the currency of Thailand. Option (B) Ringgit is the currency of Malaysia. Option (D) Kyat is the currency of Myanmar (Burma). All four are currencies of South-East Asian nations, requiring careful differentiation. Answer: (B) the third option.

Q26 D

India's overall medal tally at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games was 0 GOLD, 1 SILVER (Neeraj Chopra in javelin throw) and 5 BRONZE (Manu Bhaker × 2 in shooting; Swapnil Kusale in shooting; the men's hockey team; Aman Sehrawat in wrestling) for a total of SIX MEDALS. Option (A) — 1 gold — is incorrect; India did not win gold at Paris 2024 (Neeraj's gold was at Tokyo 2020). Option (C) and (D) misstate either gold count or silver count. Only (B) matches the actual tally. Answer: (D) the second option.