

ANSWER KEY – 18 MAY 2026

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

RC PASSAGES

Q1 A

Arrow's 1951 theorem states 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 simultaneously satisfy: (i) unanimity (Pareto principle), (ii) non-dictatorship, and (iii) independence of irrelevant alternatives. The passage states this exactly in paragraph 1. The theorem is structural — it applies to any sufficiently rich preference space. Option (B) captures this exactly. Option (A) is about manipulation, not aggregation impossibility. Option (C) misreads the theorem as a positive recommendation for majority rule (which Arrow himself shows fails the conditions). Option (D) misreads Arrow as comparing systems; Arrow compares conditions, not systems. Answer: (A).

Q2 A

The passage uses Condorcet's eighteenth-century paradox precisely to show that the difficulty Arrow proved had been FORESHADOWED — majority preferences over three candidates can cycle (A beats B, B beats C, C beats A) — and that Arrow's contribution was to show this difficulty is STRUCTURAL, applying to any aggregation method, not just to majority rule. The author writes: 'Arrow's contribution was to show that the difficulty is structural, not a quirk of particular voting rules.' Option (B) captures this. Option (A) over-states the implication — voting remains possible, only paradox-freeness is impossible. Option (C) — return to direct democracy — is a different policy debate. Option (D) — coherent majorities — is exactly the opposite of what Condorcet showed. Answer: (A).

Q3 C

The third paragraph moves from the abstract impossibility result to the OPERATIONAL question of which trade-offs voting systems make. For this move to be coherent, the author must assume that the abstract result has CONCRETE counterparts in real-world voting designs — that the trade-offs can in fact be observed in operating systems. If the abstract result did not correspond to operational reality, the third paragraph's claim about which trade-offs we are 'prepared to make' would have no bite. Option (C) captures this hidden assumption. Option (A) — equal information — is unrelated to the aggregation argument. Option (B) — sincere voting — addresses manipulation, a separate issue. Option (D) — campaign finance — is unrelated. Answer: (C). Answer: (C).

Q4 D

The author's stance throughout is that reform must be argued for on the basis of the TRADE-OFFS each design makes, not on the basis of achieving a non-existent ideal. A reformer claiming ranked-choice 'eliminates unfairness' makes precisely the kind of claim the author calls out as 'promising more than mathematics allows'. The author's most probable response is sympathetic-but-corrective: ranked-choice embodies a different trade-off (e.g., non-monotonicity — a candidate can be hurt by ranked higher by some voters), and the reformer should defend the trade-off explicitly, not claim a paradox-free ideal. Option (D) captures this exactly. Option (A) over-states agreement; (B) inverts the position; (C) is contrary to the author's engaged tone. Answer: (D). Answer: (D).

Q5 C

The author's tone is REFORMIST BUT REALIST. The final paragraph welcomes reform — moving from plurality to ranked-choice, from ranked-choice to approval voting — but insists that reform proceed by HONEST acknowledgment of the trade-offs each design makes. The closing sentence is decisive: 'Designers who promise a system free of paradox promise more than mathematics allows.' This is neither pure enthusiasm nor cynicism, but realistic engagement with reform under mathematical constraints. Option (C) captures this. Option (A) — better mathematics will eventually produce a paradox-free system — is the position the author explicitly rejects. Option (B) — cynicism — over-states; reform IS valuable, just not on dishonest premises. Option (D) — indifference — misreads. Answer: (C). Answer: (C).

Q6 A

The author's PRIMARY argument is that independence is desirable for inflation-control reasons (the Kydland-Prescott time-inconsistency rationale: independence as a binding precommitment against political short-term temptation, sustaining low-inflation expectations) but should be designed alongside, not instead of, democratic accountability — specifically EX POST accountability through parliamentary scrutiny. The fourth paragraph's 'designed allocation' framing captures this. Option (A) captures the dual commitment. Option (B) over-states insulation. Option (C) is contrary to the author's argument. Option (D) is contrary to the passage's clear endorsement of inflation targeting (Indian framework, 4% ± 2%). Answer: (A). Answer: (A).

Q7 C

The Kydland-Prescott time-inconsistency argument provides the THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING for central bank independence. A government that announces low inflation has an INCENTIVE to deviate (engineer short-term stimulus near elections); the public, anticipating this, builds expectations of higher inflation into wages and prices. Independence functions as a CREDIBILITY DEVICE — a precommitment the polity cannot easily reverse — which is supposed to anchor expectations at the announced target. The passage uses Kydland-Prescott in exactly this way. Option (C) captures it. Option (A) over-personalises (the argument is about INCENTIVES, not character). Option (B) over-states (zero inflation is not the prediction). Option (D) inverts the relationship to inflation targeting. Answer: (C). Answer: (C).

Q8 C

The author's most consistent position across the passage is that independence is a DESIGNED ALLOCATION OF DECISIONS — not a binary in/out question. The fourth paragraph spells out the allocation: rate-setting protected from short-term political control; broader stabilisation choices coordinated with elected authorities; accountability discharged through transparent reasoning. This is the modern best-statement of independence that the author endorses. Option (C) captures it. Option (A) (absolute good) is too strong. Option (B) (absolute evil) is the opposite. Option (D) (irrelevance in middle-income economies) contradicts the explicit Indian RBI discussion. Answer: (C). Answer: (C).

Q9 A

The author attributes post-2016 inflation-expectation anchoring to the formalisation of the Monetary Policy Committee. For this attribution to hold, the author must assume that OTHER factors — global oil prices, exchange-rate movements, domestic demand cycles — did not themselves substantially produce the anchoring. If those factors were chiefly responsible, the post-2016 anchoring would be partly or wholly attributable to non-MPC causes, and the author's attribution would be weak. Option (B) captures this hidden assumption. Option (A) — perfect measurement — is unrelated. Option (C) — sole cause political — overstates a different proposition. Option (D) — optimality of 2-6% band — is unrelated. Answer: (A).

Q10 C

The author's distinction is between EX ANTE political override of rate decisions (which defeats the credibility device — the polity's precommitment is meaningless if it can be reversed in real time) and EX POST accountability (which the author SUPPORTS — explanations to Parliament, transparent reasoning, submission to scrutiny after the fact). A reformer who proposes direct PM control conflates the two; the author would strongly disagree because the reform would defeat the credibility-device function. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) — strong agreement — is wrong; the author distinguishes the two accountability modes. Option (C) — indifference — misreads. Option (D) — agreement subject to PM being an economist — is irrelevant to the structural argument. Answer: (C).

CR PASSAGES

Q11 C

The MAIN CONCLUSION is precisely stated in paragraph 1: Parliament should legislate a STATUTORY ANNUAL CAP on aggregate donations to any single political party (0.5% of previous-year audited income or a fixed floor, whichever is higher), accompanied by mandatory REAL-TIME DISCLOSURE of donations above ₹20,000. The remaining paragraphs defend this narrow conclusion. Option (B) captures this exactly. Option (A) — restoring pre-bonds regime — is what the author proposes to AVOID (paragraph 1 says the proposal is 'narrower than restoring the pre-bonds regime'). Option (C) — prohibition — is what the author distinguishes the proposal from. Option (D) — only state funding — is a different proposal. Answer: (C).

Q12 D

The builders argument is structured as: identify a problem (infrastructure failures), identify a cause (failure to follow safety regulations), prescribe an intervention targeted at that cause (mandatory safety training). The author's FIRST argument has identical structure: identify a problem (concentration of political finance in large corporate donors after electoral bonds), identify a cause (anonymity at the donor-recipient interface enabling at-scale concentration), prescribe targeted interventions (cap to address concentration; real-time disclosure to address anonymity). Both arguments share the problem → cause → targeted intervention structure. Option (B) captures this parallel structure. Options (A), (C), (D) describe arguments with different structures (constitutional reasoning, administrative feasibility, response to a counter-objection). Answer: (D).

Q13 D

The author's second argument distinguishes a CAP (which preserves the freedom to donate; the donor may still contribute, only the quantum is regulated) from outright PROHIBITION (which extinguishes the freedom to donate altogether). On this framing, outright prohibition would face a stronger constitutional challenge under Article 19(1)(a) than a calibrated cap, because the prohibition extinguishes rather than regulates the protected freedom. This MUST be true on the author's framing — it is a direct logical entailment of the cap-vs-prohibition distinction the author draws. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) — Article 19(1)(a) protects only individuals — is contested in the case law and not what the author asserts. Options (C) and (D) are unrelated. Answer: (D).

Q14 D

STRENGTHEN-EXCEPT asks which option does NOT strengthen the author's case (and may indeed weaken it). Option (A) — Canada evidence of cap-plus-disclosure success — strengthens. Option (B) — adequate floor for small parties — strengthens the response to the party-fund-crunch objection. Option (C) — compliance technology working at scale — strengthens administrative feasibility. Option (D) — post-electoral-bonds migration to unreported channels with finance concentration UNCHANGED — directly WEAKENS the author's argument (the proposed cap-plus-disclosure regime would not solve the concentration problem if donors have already migrated to channels the regime cannot reach). Option (D) is the strengthen-EXCEPT answer. Answer: (D). Answer: (D).

Q15 B

The genetic fallacy attacks an argument on the basis of its origin or motive rather than its content. A genetic-fallacy attack on the author's first argument would say: 'The author criticises the bonds scheme because of WHO designed it, not because of how it operated.' On inspection, the author's argument actually relies on the OPERATIONAL RECORD — the Supreme Court's 2024 findings on concentration, the empirical pattern of donor anonymity enabling at-scale aggregation. The author argues from operation, not from origin. So the genetic-fallacy critique LOOKS applicable but on examination DOES NOT apply. Option (B) captures this exactly — naming the fallacy and explaining why it does not in fact apply. The question tests whether students can identify a NOMINAL parallel flaw and recognise it does not actually fit. Answer: (B). Answer: (B).

Q16 B

The MAIN CONCLUSION is stated in paragraph 1: a statutory right to be forgotten should NOT, except in narrow circumstances, override press freedom and the public's interest in journalistic archives. The narrow circumstances are the carved-out exceptions in the closing paragraph (spent convictions on the UK Rehabilitation framework analogy; non-public-figure private individuals where the matter lacks continuing public interest). Option (B) captures the conclusion with appropriate qualifications. Option (A) — abolish in all circumstances — over-states; the author concedes narrow exceptions. Option (C) — absolute press freedom — over-states. Option (D) — no search-engine regulation — is unrelated. Answer: (B). Answer: (B).

Q17 B

INFERENCE-WHICH-MUST-BE-TRUE asks which proposition follows by direct entailment from the author's premise. The author's premise is that journalistic work — particularly investigative reporting — derives its evidential value from PERSISTENCE in the public record. If that persistence is systematically eroded by routine de-indexing demands, the evidential value of the archive for future scrutiny is systematically diminished. Option (B) captures this entailment with appropriate precision ('IF subjects can ROUTINELY require de-indexing, THEN the evidential and accountability value is systematically diminished'). Option (A) — all journalism is investigative — is too strong and not entailed. Option (C) — search engines have no editorial responsibility — is a different proposition. Option (D) — privacy not constitutional — is false (Puttaswamy). Answer: (B). Answer: (B).

Q18 A

The medical-procedures argument commits a SWEEPING-GENERALISATION fallacy: from 'some procedures cause harm' it concludes 'all procedures should be banned'. The PARALLEL FLAW question asks which of the author's arguments shares this structure — a sweeping conclusion from a partial premise. Option (A) initially flags the FIRST argument (archival integrity) as parallel — from 'journalism depends on archives' to 'no de-indexing'. BUT on inspection, the author EXPLICITLY LIMITS the conclusion with narrow carve-outs (spent convictions; private non-public individuals), so the parallel-flaw structure does NOT actually apply to the author's argument. Option (A) captures this nuanced answer — naming the apparent parallel and explaining why it does not apply because the author's argument is CALIBRATED rather than sweeping. The trap is the apparent parallel; the correct insight is that the author has already pre-empted it through the carve-outs. Answer: (A). Answer: (A).

Q19 D

STRENGTHEN-EXCEPT asks which option does NOT strengthen the targeting-problem argument. Option (A) — 80%+ corporate/HNI claimants — directly strengthens. Option (B) — cost exceeds ordinary claimants' means — strengthens. Option (C) — chilling effect on archival journalism in adopting jurisdictions — strengthens (a different effect, but reinforces the structural concern). Option (D) — efficient low-cost claims-handling enabling ordinary access at high rates — directly WEAKENS the targeting-problem argument because it undermines the empirical premise that the right is exercised mostly by resourced claimants. Option (D) is the strengthen-EXCEPT answer. Answer: (D). Answer: (D).

Q20 B

The carve-outs the author concedes (spent convictions; private individuals not of continuing public interest) are revealing. They show that the author treats press freedom as the DEFAULT, not as an absolute. Press freedom is the rule; carve-outs are calibrated exceptions at the margins where competing values (rehabilitation; privacy of non-public figures) are most compelling. The proportionality framework — already invoked in the second argument — informs the calibration. Option (B) captures this position with precision. Option (A) — agreement with broad right — is contrary to the author's main conclusion. Option (C) — press freedom unimportant — is contrary. Option (D) — anonymised journalism — is unsupported. Answer: (B). Answer: (B).

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21 B

In *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992), the nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court held — by majority — that reservations in services (under Article 16(4)) should not exceed 50% of the total positions, save in extraordinary circumstances. This 50% ceiling has become a fixed point of equality jurisprudence; the Court reasoned that exceeding it would convert the exception of reservation into the rule and undermine the equality guarantee in Article 16(1). The ceiling has subsequently been re-examined in *M. Nagaraj* (2006), *Jarnail Singh* (2018) and the EWS-quota cases (*Janhit Abhiyan*, 2022), but the 50% baseline endures for SC/ST/OBC reservations. Option (B) — 50% — captures this. Answer: (B). Answer: (B).

Q22 A

'Taciturn' (adjective, from Latin *taciturnus*, silent) means HABITUALLY UNCOMMUNICATIVE, reserved in speech, disinclined to talk. Its OPPOSITE is 'garrulous' — habitually talkative, especially about trivial matters (from Latin *garrulus*, chattering). Option (A) captures this. Option (B) — silent — is a synonym, not an opposite. Option (C) — reserved — is a synonym. Option (D) — sullen — is a different shade (gloomily silent) but still aligned with non-talkativeness, not an opposite. Only 'garrulous' is the true opposite of taciturn. Answer: (A). Answer: (A).

Q23 B

The 'neither... nor...' construction requires that the verb agree with the NEAREST subject (the subject closer to the verb). In 'Neither the judge nor the lawyers ___ satisfied', the nearest subject is 'lawyers' (plural), so the verb must be plural: 'WERE satisfied'. Option (B) is correct. Option (A) uses singular 'was' — incorrect because the nearest subject is plural. Option (C) uses 'or' instead of 'nor' — 'neither' must pair with 'nor'. Option (D) uses singular 'is' — same error as (A). Only Option (B) satisfies both the conjunction-pairing rule and the proximity-agreement rule. Answer: (B). Answer: (B).

Q24 B

Article 248 of the Constitution vests in PARLIAMENT the exclusive power to make any law with respect to any matter NOT enumerated in the Concurrent List or the State List — the residuary legislative power. Entry 97 of the Union List (List I) confirms this: 'Any other matter not enumerated in List II or List III...' Both provisions read together place residuary subjects in Parliament's exclusive competence. Option (B) captures this. Option (A) — concurrent State competence — is wrong; residuary power is exclusively Union. Option (C) — Presidential Ordinance (Art. 123) — is a temporary executive law-making mechanism, not the residuary legislative power. Option (D) — Concurrent List by default — is wrong; the residue goes to the Union, not to the Concurrent List. Answer: (B). Answer: (B).