

ANSWER KEY – 24 MAY 2026

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

RC PASSAGES

Q1 B

The passage defines 'peak water' in the second paragraph: 'As ice melts, rivers swell... Hydrologists describe this as peak water — a counterfeit abundance that masks the eventual decline. Once a glacier shrinks past a certain threshold, its capacity to release meltwater in the lean summer months collapses.' This is precisely option (B): a temporary phase of elevated river flow that precedes long-term scarcity. The passage frames it as a deceptive 'counterfeit abundance' — high now, but a prelude to collapse. Option (A) inverts the meaning (low flow rather than elevated). Option (C) confuses peak water with reservoir capacity, which is not what the passage describes. Option (D) misreads peak water as a demand-side concept (peak water demand), whereas the passage uses it as a supply-side phenomenon driven by glacial dynamics. Only (B) tracks the passage's definition exactly.

Q2 B

The final substantive paragraph endorses precisely the proposition in option (B): 'Cutting greenhouse-gas emissions is the long-horizon answer, but black-carbon reductions — through cleaner cookstoves, tighter diesel norms and curbs on agricultural burning — offer faster, regional relief because soot accelerates melt by darkening ice surfaces.' The author treats black-carbon reduction as a complementary, faster-acting regional measure alongside long-term GHG mitigation. Option (A) is too restrictive — the author explicitly endorses multiple interventions, not only GHG mitigation. Option (C) misreads the passage's clear concern about GLOFs (the 2023 Sikkim event is cited precisely to demonstrate inadequacy of safeguards). Option (D) inverts the passage's argument about peak water (the author treats increased discharge as a 'counterfeit abundance', not a permanent gain).

Q3 B

The author's tone is measured and evidence-driven throughout: figures from ICIMOD are cited, mechanisms are explained, and conclusions are drawn cautiously. Words like 'unsettled even seasoned glaciologists', 'grim demonstration' and 'is, as ever, the open question' suggest restrained concern rather than alarmism or detachment. The author neither shouts nor dismisses; the prose is sober but the substantive worry is real and visible. Option (A) 'polemical and accusatory' overstates — there is no enemy named, no rhetorical attack. Option (C) 'detached and indifferent' understates — the author clearly cares about the outcome. Option (D) 'celebratory and optimistic' contradicts the entire framing of the piece, which is structured around losses, risks and unanswered questions. (B) best captures the calibrated, evidence-led, quietly alarmed register.

Q4 B

The third paragraph introduces GLOFs as the 'second-order risk' from glacial melt and immediately uses the 2023 South Lhonak Lake event as an illustration: 'The 2023 South Lhonak Lake event in Sikkim, which destroyed a major hydropower facility and killed scores of residents, was a grim demonstration.' The passage then adds that 'Mapping exercises now identify over two hundred and fifty potentially dangerous lakes across the Indian Himalayas, but early-warning infrastructure remains sparse.' The dual purpose is therefore (i) to demonstrate the destructive potential of GLOFs and (ii) to highlight the inadequacy of existing safeguards. Option (B) captures both prongs. Option (A) inverts the author's point. Option (C) overreads — the author does not argue against all hydropower. Option (D) is contradicted by the mention of 250+ potentially dangerous lakes, which signals an ongoing, distributed phenomenon.

Q5 B

To weaken the author's concern about long-term water scarcity, the strongest blow is evidence that the lost glacial meltwater will be substantially compensated by another water source in the same basins. Option (B) supplies exactly that: 'monsoon rainfall is expected to increase substantially in the affected basins, more than compensating for lost glacial meltwater in the dry season.' If true, the predicted post-peak-water scarcity disappears, undermining the author's central concern. Option (A) strengthens, not weakens (more ice loss = worse). Option (C) strengthens (more soot = more melt). Option (D) is tangential — refusal to redesign hydropower does not bear on water supply. Only (B) directly attacks the supply-side prediction the author makes, and so most weakens it.

Q6 B

The author's central argument runs through the whole passage: translation has moved from an invisible service to a recognised form of co-authorship engaged in cultural negotiation across asymmetrical worlds. The phrases 'a translator is an author of a particular kind: a co-author who must inhabit two literary traditions at once', 'negotiation across asymmetrical cultural worlds', and the closing 'the translator is no longer the absent servant; she is...a citizen of two republics' all converge on option (B). Option (A) describes the OLD view the author is rejecting. Option (C) is not asserted — the author critiques English's dominance, not celebrates it. Option (D) is far stronger than the author's claim and not supported anywhere in the passage. Only (B) captures the central thesis.

Q7 B

The phrase 'gravitational pull' is used metaphorically: 'English, as the world's dominant literary lingua franca, exerts a gravitational pull that can flatten the textures of source texts...' The 'pull' draws texts toward conformity with English's conventions — that is, a dominant influence that exerts directional pressure. Option (B) captures this precisely. Option (A) gives the literal physics meaning, which is not the contextual meaning. Option (C) misreads the metaphor as a quantitative density claim. Option (D) negates the very point the author is making — 'gravitational' here is loaded precisely because the consequence (flattening of textures) is real and significant. The contextual reading is unambiguously (B).

Q8 B

The passage uses the dharma/duty/religion/law example to illustrate the broader claim made in the same paragraph: 'Every choice — a register, a colloquial substitution, a footnote suppressed or retained — is a small act of interpretation. To translate the word dharma as duty is to make a claim about its conceptual neighbourhood that religion or law would not.' The point is that translation choices carry interpretive weight; the choice between competing English renderings reshapes the conceptual associations the reader brings to the word. Option (B) tracks this exactly. Option (A) is too absolute and not the author's claim. Option (C) overstates incapacity. Option (D) prescribes a translation policy (retain untranslated) that the author does not advocate — in fact, the author warns against exoticisation as much as smoothing.

Q9 B

The third paragraph explicitly poses the two extremes as twin risks: 'A translation that smooths every cultural unfamiliarity into legible English risks performing a kind of erasure. The opposite extreme — a translation so dense with untranslated terms and italicised foreignness that it becomes an exhibit rather than a book — risks exoticisation. Between these poles, the contemporary translator must navigate.' The author treats both extremes as ethically problematic and prescribes navigation between them. Option (B) captures this exactly. Option (A) misreads the author as commercially permissive. Option (C) treats only exoticisation as bad — but the author equally condemns over-smoothing as 'erasure'. Option (D) inverts the balance the author seeks. Only (B) is faithful to the paragraph's structure.

Q10 A

To strengthen the claim that translation has become recognised co-authorship, we need additional evidence of institutional or material parity between translators and source authors. Option (A) provides exactly that: 'Major international literary prizes have begun awarding equal prize money to translator and source author.' Equal prize money is a powerful symbolic and material marker of recognised co-authorship — it operationalises the very recognition the author describes. Option (B) weakens (lower pay = lesser recognition). Option (C) weakens (no cover credit = invisibility, the old view). Option (D) weakens (readers preferring unmediated access undermines the co-authorship framing). Only (A) strengthens the author's central claim about the translator's elevated status.

CR PASSAGES

Q11 B

The proponents' argument runs: granular caste data is necessary for rationally allocated affirmative-action; Bihar and Karnataka show such data can be collected and policy-relevant; constitutional and judicial doctrine push toward enumeration; therefore India should mandate a comprehensive caste enumeration in the 2027 Census. Option (B) restates this conclusion verbatim. Option (A) misreads — Bihar's exercise is cited approvingly, not criticised. Option (C) is the opposite of the proponents' position. Option (D) inverts the proponents' use of judicial doctrine. The proponents do not attack the Court; they invoke its insistence on quantifiable data as support for enumeration. Only (B) is the main conclusion.

Q12 C

Identify the unstated assumption — a premise required for the argument to work but not explicitly stated. The proponents' core move is: counting castes is necessary to design redistributive policy about castes. Option (C) — 'counting a social category is necessary and useful for designing redistributive policy in respect of it' — is the foundational premise. Without it, the entire policy-justification chain collapses; granular data has no policy purpose if counting itself is unnecessary. Option (A) is stated explicitly in the argument ('reservation benefits cannot be rationally allocated without granular data'), so it is a stated premise, not unstated. Option (B) is a contestable factual claim (1931 did enumerate caste; not unstated). Option (D) is not required — the proponents need not assume political representativeness; they cite Bihar/Karnataka as proofs-of-concept, not as representative samples.

Q13 B

To weaken the proponents' argument, identify what undermines the necessity of a full census enumeration. Option (B) does this most directly: if a sample-based NSS can produce equally reliable caste data at 5% of the cost, then the policy goal (granular data) can be achieved without a full census, and the proponents' specific demand collapses. The premise 'reservation policy requires granular sub-group data' is preserved; what is denied is that the FULL CENSUS is the only or best way to get it. Option (A) strengthens (more evidence supporting the value of enumeration). Option (C) strengthens (judicial requirement). Option (D) is broadly supportive (constitutional directive). Only (B) attacks the necessity of the specific instrument the proponents recommend, and so most weakens their conclusion.

Q14 A

To strengthen the proponents' argument, add evidence that the proposed enumeration actually delivers the promised policy benefit without producing the harms opponents predict. Option (A) does both: independent audits confirm that Bihar's data, applied to existing reservation rules, would correct over-representation of dominant OBC sub-groups and improve targeting — without significant litigation. This directly counters the opponents' two main objections (administrative capacity and litigation risk) while empirically validating the proponents' policy claim. Option (B) is irrelevant to the argument's strength. Option (C) is a cost objection that weakens, not strengthens. Option (D) signals political resistance — also a weakening fact. Only (A) provides empirical and political vindication of the proponents' core claims.

Q15 B

The opponents' 'counting is recognition' point is a normative claim about the cultural and political consequences of State enumeration: enumeration entrenches identity, which is bad. The proponents' rejoinder is precisely that caste is ALREADY institutionalised in admissions, employment and welfare; the choice is between blind and calibrated approaches, not between recognition and non-recognition. Option (B) captures this: the opponents' move does not engage the proponents' empirical point about existing institutionalisation. Option (A) is wrong because the opponents' claim is not empirical; it is normative-ideological. Option (C) misuses 'logical contradiction'. Option (D) is incorrect — the opponents' point is not factually wrong about the Census; it is normatively contestable. The most precise characterisation is (B).

Q16 B

The opponents' argument runs: legal-tender status for cryptocurrency surrenders monetary sovereignty, imports volatility into household balance sheets, and increases illicit-finance exposure; the same policy goals can be achieved more safely through a CBDC; therefore India should not recognise any privately issued cryptocurrency as legal tender, but should expand its CBDC and regulate cryptocurrencies as taxable assets. Option (B) restates this conclusion exactly. Option (A) is contradicted by the opponents' explicit endorsement of CBDCs. Option (C) is the opposite of the opponents' position (they prefer CBDCs). Option (D) is also opposed (they describe El Salvador as 'quietly partially reversed', not a success). Only (B) is the main conclusion.

Q17 A

The monetary-sovereignty argument moves: counter-cyclical monetary policy requires State control of the unit of account; legal-tender status for a private cryptocurrency surrenders that control; therefore monetary sovereignty is compromised. The unstated assumption is that counter-cyclical monetary policy is itself a desirable and useful tool — otherwise its loss is not a cost. Option (A) supplies precisely this premise. Without assuming the value of counter-cyclical monetary policy, the loss-of-control point is normatively empty. Option (B) is a factual claim about supply, not the assumption that drives the sovereignty objection. Option (C) is an ad hominem irrelevant to the sovereignty argument. Option (D) is contextual but not assumed by the argument. Only (A) is the load-bearing unstated premise.

Q18 A

To strengthen the opponents' conclusion, we need empirical evidence that legal-tender adoption of private cryptocurrencies produces the very harms opponents predict, while CBDCs deliver the same benefits without those harms. Option (A) provides exactly that: peer-reviewed cross-country studies showing higher household balance-sheet volatility, reduced monetary transmission, and no inclusion gains beyond what CBDCs can deliver. This directly vindicates both prongs of the opponents' argument (harms of private crypto + adequacy of CBDC). Option (B) weakens (lower volatility undercuts the financial-stability objection). Option (C) weakens (cheaper remittances support the advocates). Option (D) weakens (CBDC technical glitches undermine the proposed alternative). Only (A) strengthens.

Q19 B

To weaken the opponents' conclusion, we need evidence either that the harms they predict are illusory or that the CBDC alternative cannot deliver the benefits they claim it can. Option (B) does the latter most powerfully: empirical evidence that CBDCs cannot achieve financial inclusion at scale because of infrastructure gaps, whereas a regulated private cryptocurrency can — without producing volatility. This severs the opponents' bridge argument ('CBDC can do what private crypto can do, more safely') by showing the bridge does not hold. Option (A) is neutral to weakly-supporting opponents (fiscal stress in El Salvador supports caution). Option (C) supports opponents (volatility persists). Option (D) supports opponents (RBI warning). Only (B) weakens by attacking the substitutability claim that the opponents' conclusion crucially relies on.

Q20 B

The opponents argue by analogy and substitutability: a CBDC can deliver the same policy benefits (financial inclusion, remittance compression, monetary innovation) as a private cryptocurrency, but without the harms (volatility, sovereignty loss, illicit-finance exposure). The argument's structure is: A and B share the relevant benefits; A lacks B's harms; therefore prefer A. This is argument by analogy combined with a substitutability claim that the public option dominates the private option on all relevant dimensions. Option (B) captures both moves. Option (A) misreads — the opponents do not assume their conclusion; they build to it from independent premises. Option (C) ignores the analytical content of the comparison. Option (D) misidentifies the logical form — affirming the consequent is irrelevant to this kind of policy comparison.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21 C

Karnataka leads coffee production in India, accounting for approximately 70% of the country's total coffee output. The Western Ghats districts of Chikmagalur, Coorg (Kodagu) and Hassan are the primary growing regions. Kerala (Option A) is the second-largest producer, mainly in Wayanad, but well behind Karnataka. Tamil Nadu (Option B) is third (Pulneys, Nilgiris). Andhra Pradesh (Option D) is a much smaller producer, mostly in the Araku Valley region. The dominance of Karnataka in coffee production has been stable for decades, reflecting the favourable elevation, rainfall and shade-grown ecology of the Western Ghats. Answer: (C) Karnataka.

Q22 C

The Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, was instituted on 2 January 1954 by then-President Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The first recipients, announced the same year, were Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, C. Rajagopalachari and Dr. C.V. Raman. The award initially excluded posthumous conferment, but the rules were amended in 1955 to permit it. The Bharat Ratna may be awarded to any person, without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex, for exceptional service or performance of the highest order in any field. Options (A) 1950, (B) 1952 and (D) 1956 are incorrect. The correct year of institution is 1954. Answer: (C) 1954.

Q23 C

India hosted the G20 Leaders' Summit on 9-10 September 2023 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The summit marked the culmination of India's G20 presidency under the theme 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — One Earth · One Family · One Future'. Major outcomes included the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, the African Union's admission as a permanent G20 member, and the launch of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). The summit was held in New Delhi, the national capital, not in Mumbai (A), Bengaluru (B) or Hyderabad (D), though those cities hosted G20 working-group and ministerial meetings during the year. Answer: (C) New Delhi.

Q24 B

'Ephemeral' means lasting for a very short time, transitory, or fleeting. Its opposite is something that lasts a long time — 'enduring' (Option B). 'Transient' (A) is a synonym, not an antonym. 'Fragile' (C) refers to physical breakability, not temporal duration. 'Sudden' (D) refers to abruptness of onset, not duration. The correct antonym is therefore (B) Enduring. A useful memory aid: 'ephemeral' shares its root with 'ephemera' (insects that live only a day), reinforcing the brief-duration meaning, against which 'enduring' (lasting) is the natural opposite. Answer: (B).

Q25 B

'Obfuscate' means to render obscure, unclear, or unintelligible — typically deliberately. Its closest synonym is 'confuse' (B). 'Clarify' (A) is an antonym. 'Simplify' (C) is also an antonym (simplifying makes things clearer). 'Reveal' (D) is the opposite — disclosing rather than obscuring. The correct synonym is (B) Confuse. The word's Latin root 'obfuscare' (to darken) underscores the obscuring sense. A common exam tip: 'obfuscate' often appears in contexts about deliberate concealment in legal, political or technical writing — 'the witness's testimony seemed designed to obfuscate rather than clarify the facts.' Answer: (B).

Q26 B

The idiom 'to bell the cat' derives from the fable in which mice agree that hanging a bell around a cat's neck would warn them of its approach, but no mouse is willing to undertake the dangerous task of placing the bell. The idiom therefore means 'to take on a dangerous or difficult task for the benefit of others' — Option (B). Option (A) misses the 'for benefit of others' element. Option (C) misreads the idiom as about irritating authority. Option (D) confuses it with idioms about celebration. The Aesop's-fable origin is the standard reference, and the idiom is used in Indian English contexts to describe political or social initiatives that require courage. Answer: (B).

Q27 B

The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations was adopted on 18 April 1961 at Vienna and entered into force on 24 April 1964. It is the foundational treaty governing diplomatic relations between sovereign States, codifying centuries of customary international law on diplomatic privileges and immunities — inviolability of diplomatic premises, personal inviolability of diplomatic agents, and exemption from local jurisdiction. India ratified it in 1965. Option (A) 1958 was the year of the Geneva Conventions on the Law of the Sea (the original four). Option (C) 1963 was the year of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (a closely related but distinct instrument). Option (D) 1969 was the year of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Answer: (B) 1961.

Q28 B

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar described Article 32 of the Constitution — the right to constitutional remedies, which empowers the Supreme Court to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights — as 'the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it.' This statement was made during the Constituent Assembly debates and is one of the most frequently cited passages. The right under Article 32 is itself a fundamental right (placed within Part III) and cannot be suspended except as provided by the Constitution itself. Option (A) is a phrase associated more with general descriptions of judicial review. Options (C) and (D) are paraphrases but not Ambedkar's exact formulation. The correct and most-quoted version is 'the heart and soul of the Constitution' — Option (B).

Q29 B

Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973) is the landmark case in which a 13-judge bench of the Supreme Court, by a 7-6 majority, propounded the Basic Structure Doctrine — holding that while Parliament has wide power to amend the Constitution under Article 368, it cannot alter the 'basic structure' or 'essential features' of the Constitution. The doctrine has since been the bedrock of Indian constitutional jurisprudence. *Golak Nath* (1967) (Option A) had earlier held that Parliament could not amend fundamental rights at all — a position overruled in *Kesavananda*. *Minerva Mills* (1980) (Option C) reaffirmed and extended the doctrine to strike down clauses of the 42nd Amendment. *Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain* (1975) (D) applied the doctrine to election-law amendments. The doctrine was first articulated in (B) *Kesavananda*.

Q30 C

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 was enacted to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 — the colonial-era criminal code drafted by Lord Macaulay. The BNS came into force on 1 July 2024, alongside two companion statutes: the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) replacing the Code of Criminal Procedure (Option A); and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) replacing the Indian Evidence Act (Option B). The Indian Contract Act (Option D) was not replaced — it remains in force. The BNS retains much of the IPC's substantive content but reorganises and adds new offences (e.g., organised crime, terrorism, mob lynching). The statute the BNS replaced is the IPC — answer (C).