

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.

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PASSAGE 1 (RC) — CARBON CREDITS AND INDIA'S VOLUNTARY MARKET (CLIMATE / FINANCE) Q1-5

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

When India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme was notified by the Ministry of Power in 2023, it set up what is, on paper, a tightly governed compliance market: large industrial emitters in cement, aluminium, steel, fertiliser and chlor-alkali would receive intensity-based emission targets and earn carbon credit certificates if they out-performed those targets. Beneath this compliance layer, the government also signalled that a voluntary segment would coexist — letting smaller polluters, project developers and even individuals trade credits generated by activities like afforestation, methane capture from landfills and switching captive power to renewables.

Two years on, the voluntary market is at a crossroads. Demand has surged from Indian subsidiaries of multinationals racing to meet their net-zero commitments, while supply lags. The reason is structural: most voluntary projects in India follow methodologies set by global registries such as Verra and Gold Standard, both of which have tightened their additionality and permanence requirements after a series of investigative reports in 2023 questioned the integrity of forestry credits in particular. Developers complain that audit costs have doubled, and that a credit which once took eighteen months to issue now takes thirty.

Critics argue that the voluntary market is, at best, a useful supplement to direct regulation, and at worst a way for emitters to defer abatement. Supporters counter that without a price signal, India's small landholders and waste-management operators have no financial reason to undertake long-horizon mitigation work. Both camps agree that the next eighteen months will determine whether the voluntary segment matures into a credible source of finance or collapses into the kind of greenwashing that has dogged older markets.

What seems clear is that India's voluntary carbon market cannot grow in isolation from the compliance segment. If the compliance market eventually accepts a fraction of high-quality voluntary credits for surrender — as the European Union once did before discontinuing the practice — voluntary projects gain an exit route to corporate buyers who must, by regulation, hold emission allowances. Without that bridge, voluntary credits risk becoming a financial product with thinning demand and rising supply costs, an unhappy combination for any commodity.

1. In the context of the passage, the word 'additionality' most nearly means:

- A. The requirement that the issued credit be tradable across multiple jurisdictions without further approval.
- B. The requirement that a project's emission reductions can be verified by independent third-party auditors.
- C. The requirement that a credit-generating project would not have happened without the carbon-credit revenue.
- D. The requirement that a project deliver co-benefits to local communities in addition to emission reductions.

2. Which of the following best states the central argument of the passage?

- A. The voluntary carbon market in India faces a credibility test; its future depends on integrity reforms and a linkage to the compliance segment.
- B. India's compliance carbon market has displaced the voluntary market entirely, rendering voluntary credits financially irrelevant.
- C. Multinationals' net-zero commitments are the sole driver of carbon-credit demand in India, and small landholders cannot benefit.
- D. Indian developers should abandon Verra and Gold Standard methodologies in favour of bespoke domestic registries that lower audit costs on these facts.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that the doubling of audit costs is most directly attributable to:

- A. A unilateral decision by the Indian government to raise audit fees for voluntary projects.
- B. A shortage of qualified verification firms operating in the Indian voluntary carbon-credit market.
- C. Tighter additionality and permanence rules imposed by global registries after integrity controversies.
- D. An increase in international demand that has bid up the price of all carbon-related services worldwide.

4. The author's tone in the closing paragraph is best described as:

- A. Triumphant and celebratory
- B. Despairing and resigned
- C. Heavily sarcastic
- D. Cautiously analytical

5. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the supporters' argument cited in paragraph three?

- A. Global registries are likely to ease their additionality and permanence requirements within the next financial year.
- B. Most Indian small landholders already receive sufficient state subsidies to undertake afforestation without any carbon-credit revenue.
- C. Voluntary carbon credits issued in India have, on average, been verified by leading global auditors.
- D. Indian subsidiaries of multinationals have publicly committed to long-term net-zero targets covering Scope 3 emissions on these facts.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — VERNACULAR OTT SUBTITLES AND INDIA'S LITERARY REVIVAL (CULTURE / TECHNOLOGY) Q6-10

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

Until the late 2010s, India's literary publishing was unmistakably a metropolitan industry. Sales of fiction in English dwarfed those in Tamil, Bengali, Marathi or Kannada, and even in those languages the most reliable buyers were diaspora readers in London, Toronto and San Francisco. The economics were brutal: a novel that sold three thousand copies in Hindi was considered a success, while its English translation routinely cleared fifteen thousand. The author who chose to write in a regional language was choosing, in effect, a smaller stage.

Two technological shifts have begun to redraw this map. The first is the streaming platforms' realisation, around 2019, that India's regional-language audiences would pay for high-quality subtitled content. As Korean drama proved globally and Malayalam cinema proved locally, subtitles do not impede engagement: they invite it. The second shift, less remarked on, is the platforms' growing willingness to optionally subtitle a regional-language film in seven or eight other Indian languages, not just in English.

Together these shifts have created an unexpected secondary market: when a Malayalam-language thriller becomes a national talking point in Hindi subtitle form, its underlying source novel — sometimes long out of print — sees a demand spike across languages. Publishers have responded by commissioning quick translations not into English, but into Hindi, Bengali and Marathi. A novel that once travelled out of its regional confines only by being translated into English now reaches its national audience through bilateral regional translations, and the English translation is a tertiary product.

Sceptics caution that this revival is a streaming-driven epiphenomenon — that the moment a regional film fades from the algorithmic queue, its source novel fades with it. They point to the still-marginal share of regional-language titles in airport bookstores. Optimists reply that even a temporary visibility boost retrains readers in the habit of expecting regional literature to be relevant, and that the new bilateral translation networks — Malayalam-to-Tamil, Bengali-to-Marathi — outlive any single streaming title. Both sides agree that the literary map of India in 2030 will look very different from the one in 2015, even if they disagree on the cause.

6. In the second paragraph, the phrase 'subtitles do not impede engagement: they invite it' most directly conveys the idea that:

- A. Streaming platforms have proven that subtitled content always outperforms dubbed content in the Indian market on these facts.
- B. Audiences increasingly seek out subtitled content precisely because subtitles make foreign-language stories more accessible.
- C. Indian audiences are inherently more multilingual than audiences in other large markets.
- D. Subtitling technology has become so cheap that platforms can subtitle any content at marginal cost.

7. Which of the following is the most appropriate title for the passage?

- A. Why Indian Publishing Is Doomed in the Streaming Age
- B. The Quiet Decline of English-Language Indian Fiction Across the Past Decade
- C. How OTT Subtitles Are Rewiring India's Regional Literary Markets
- D. A History of Indian Literary Translation Across Several Centuries of Activity

8. The author cites the example of a Malayalam-language thriller primarily to:

- A. Illustrate the secondary market in source-novel demand created by cross-regional subtitling.
- B. Argue that Malayalam cinema is artistically superior to other regional Indian cinemas.
- C. Demonstrate that English translations of Indian novels are no longer commercially viable in 2025.
- D. Show that streaming platforms have replaced traditional publishers as the primary commissioners of fiction.

9. Which inference about the optimists' position is best supported by the passage?

- A. The optimists believe that the lasting value of bilateral translation networks may outlast any single streaming hit.
- B. The optimists believe that streaming platforms will always sustain literary revival regardless of viewer fatigue on these facts.
- C. The optimists believe that English-language fiction in India will eventually disappear from airport bookstores.
- D. The optimists believe that streaming platforms should be regulated to commission regional-language fiction.

10. The author's overall stance toward the regional-language literary revival is best described as:

- A. Uncritical celebration
- B. Dismissive scepticism
- C. Resigned cynicism
- D. Balanced and analytical

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD INDIA INTRODUCE A WEALTH TAX ON INDIVIDUALS WORTH MORE THAN ₹50 CRORE? (ECONOMICS / POLICY) Q11-15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

India abolished its wealth tax in 2015 on the ground that the revenue raised — about ₹1,000 crore a year — did not justify the administrative cost of valuing illiquid assets such as art, jewellery and unlisted equity. Eleven years on, a coalition of economists and civil-society groups is arguing that the country should reintroduce a wealth tax, this time levied at a flat 2 percent on net assets above ₹50 crore. They estimate that such a tax would apply to roughly 8,000 individuals and could generate ₹1.2 lakh crore annually — enough, they say, to fund the entire central allocation for school education.

Three premises support this argument. First, the share of national wealth held by India's top 0.001 percent has risen sharply over the past decade, from approximately 11 percent in 2015 to over 18 percent in 2024, even as median household wealth has stagnated in real terms. Second, valuation technology has improved: listed equity is trivially valued, unlisted equity can be valued using transaction databases that did not exist a decade ago, and real-estate registries are increasingly digitised under the National Generic Document Registration System. Third, the high threshold of ₹50 crore deliberately excludes the salaried upper middle class, the small-business owner and the family-farm proprietor, all of whom were swept into earlier wealth-tax nets.

The conclusion drawn is that a reformed wealth tax would raise substantial revenue, address rising inequality without distorting middle-class savings, and exploit administrative capacity that did not exist when the earlier tax was abolished. The coalition acknowledges that very wealthy individuals might attempt to shift assets offshore, but argues that India's recent participation in the global automatic exchange of tax information frameworks substantially reduces that risk. They conclude that the time is right to revive the wealth tax in a narrowly targeted form.

11. Which of the following is the main conclusion of the passage?

- A. India's top 0.001 percent now hold over 18 percent of national wealth, an unprecedented level of inequality.
- B. The 2015 abolition of the wealth tax was an administrative error that has cost the government substantial revenue.
- C. India should reintroduce a wealth tax at 2 percent on net assets above ₹50 crore on the strength of three supporting premises.
- D. India should fully fund its school education budget through a new wealth tax rather than through the existing fiscal framework.

12. Which of the following is an unstated assumption underlying the argument?

- A. That the central allocation for school education amounts to approximately ₹1.2 lakh crore annually as per the most recent Union Budget allocations made for FY25.
- B. That India's median household wealth has stagnated in real terms over the past decade as compared with the growth in top-decile assets recorded over the same period.
- C. That listed equity can be valued using publicly available stock prices at the official closing rate on any chosen valuation date during the assessment year.
- D. That the administrative cost of running the new wealth tax will be lower than the ₹1.2 lakh crore it is projected to raise.

13. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the argument?

- A. Roughly 60 percent of the wealth of the top 0.001 percent is held in unlisted equity for which transaction-database valuations have a wide error band of 25-40 percent.
- B. India's recent automatic-information-exchange frameworks have been credited with recovering ₹35,000 crore of previously undisclosed foreign assets.
- C. A pilot study of the National Generic Document Registration System shows that real-estate valuations remain inaccurate by 15-20 percent in tier-3 cities on these facts.
- D. The median household wealth in India has stagnated in real terms over the past ten years, while the top decile's wealth has grown by 9 percent annually.

14. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the argument?

- A. Several high-net-worth Indian families have publicly stated that they would relocate to Singapore if a 2 percent wealth tax were imposed.
- B. Norway's annual wealth tax, applied at a similar rate on a similar threshold, has produced sustained revenue and no observable capital flight since 2015.
- C. The central government has indicated that any new revenue from a wealth tax would be earmarked for general consolidated fund use, not education on these facts.
- D. Other developing economies have abolished wealth taxes recently after finding them administratively burdensome.

15. Which of the following reasoning patterns is most similar to the argument in the passage?

- A. A policy that has worked elsewhere should be adopted without modification because its empirical record proves universal applicability.
- B. A policy that succeeded two decades ago should be repealed because the conditions that justified it have changed.
- C. A policy that failed two decades ago should be re-attempted because the underlying conditions that caused its failure no longer obtain.
- D. A policy that has been criticised by experts should be defended because experts have historically been wrong about policy matters.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — SHOULD ATTENDANCE BE MADE NON-MANDATORY IN INDIA'S CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES? (EDUCATION / POLICY)

Q16-20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16-20.

The University Grants Commission's 1995 directive on minimum class attendance — requiring undergraduate students to attend at least 75 percent of classes to qualify for end-semester examinations — has come under increasing pressure. A group of vice-chancellors has petitioned the Ministry of Education to make attendance non-mandatory in central universities, arguing that the 75 percent rule is a relic of a pre-internet pedagogical era and that contemporary undergraduates can learn equally well by combining recorded lectures, peer study groups, and direct examination preparation.

Three arguments support the petition. First, the petitioners cite a 2024 internal study at the University of Delhi which found no statistically significant correlation between attendance and final examination marks in seventeen of twenty-two undergraduate courses surveyed. Second, they argue that compelling attendance discriminates against students from lower-income backgrounds who must commute long distances or work part-time, while privileged students who live on campus can comply trivially. Third, they point out that elite universities in Europe and North America do not enforce attendance rules and that India's continued enforcement signals an outdated paternalism.

Critics within the academic community are unconvinced. They argue that the 75 percent rule serves functions the petitioners ignore: it underwrites peer interaction, sustains demand for full-time teaching positions, and signals to employers that an undergraduate degree certifies sustained engagement, not merely the ability to pass examinations. They further argue that the University of Delhi's internal study did not control for the self-selection of students into low-attendance courses — students confident of self-study choose such courses, biasing the correlation.

The petitioners conclude that the 75 percent rule has outlived its useful life, that the available evidence does not support its continued enforcement, and that the Ministry of Education should permit central universities to make attendance non-mandatory for undergraduate students. They concede that some adjustment may be needed in laboratory-intensive and clinical courses, but argue that the default rule for liberal-arts and social-science undergraduates should be choice, not compulsion.

16. Which of the following best states the main conclusion of the petitioners' argument?

- A. The University of Delhi's 2024 internal study showed no statistically significant correlation between attendance and examination marks in seventeen of twenty-two courses surveyed.
- B. Central universities in India should make attendance non-mandatory for undergraduate students, with possible exceptions for laboratory and clinical courses.
- C. Elite universities in Europe and North America have abandoned mandatory attendance for undergraduates, providing a model for Indian central universities to follow without delay.
- D. Compelling attendance discriminates against students from lower-income backgrounds and is therefore unjust regardless of any educational rationale that might be advanced in its defence.

17. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the petitioners' argument?

- A. A nationally representative five-year longitudinal study finds that undergraduates exempt from attendance rules drop out at twice the rate of their peers and report sharply lower satisfaction.
- B. The 2024 University of Delhi internal study covered only one academic year and used a sample of fewer than 800 students across the 22 courses.
- C. Vice-chancellors who signed the petition are drawn primarily from humanities departments and have limited experience administering laboratory-intensive courses on these facts under settled law.
- D. The cost to central universities of monitoring attendance has risen by 30 percent in the past five years due to new biometric systems.

18. Which of the following is an unstated assumption of the critics' counter-argument?

- A. That self-selection biases the correlation between attendance and final examination marks in the 2024 University of Delhi internal study cited by the petitioners on these facts.
- B. That the 2024 University of Delhi internal study covered seventeen of twenty-two undergraduate courses, as the petitioners themselves describe in their petition.
- C. That the 75 percent attendance rule is enforced in every central university with equal rigour and uniform monitoring across faculties and departments alike.
- D. That peer interaction, demand for teaching positions, and employer signalling are valuable enough to outweigh the petitioners' concerns about equity and outdatedness.

19. Which of the following best identifies a flaw in the petitioners' reliance on the University of Delhi 2024 internal study?

- A. The study fails to demonstrate a positive correlation, which is necessary for any policy conclusion.
- B. The study is internal to one institution and therefore cannot speak to other universities.
- C. The study does not control for self-selection of students into low-attendance courses, weakening any causal inference.
- D. The study uses statistical significance as its criterion when effect-size measurement is more appropriate for educational research.

20. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the petitioners' argument?

- A. International rankings of European universities have declined modestly in the past five years.
- B. Some Indian universities currently enforce attendance more rigorously than the UGC mandate requires, applying a 90 percent threshold for liberal-arts courses.
- C. Critics of the petition have historically opposed every reform proposal made by vice-chancellors during the last decade.
- D. Universities that have abandoned attendance rules report no significant change in dropout rates and slightly higher rates of self-directed research engagement.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21-26 · 6 Marks

Standalone questions on current affairs, static GK, vocabulary in context and idiom usage. No passage required.

21. Choose the word most similar in meaning to 'EPHEMERAL':

- A. Eternal
- B. Transient
- C. Profound
- D. Pliable

22. The idiom 'to bell the cat' means:

- A. To make a great deal of noise about a small issue on these facts.
- B. To take on a difficult or dangerous task on behalf of a group.
- C. To celebrate a victory prematurely.
- D. To be punished for someone else's mistake.

23. The 'Mission Karmayogi' initiative, frequently in the news, relates to:

- A. Capacity-building of civil servants in the central government.
- B. Skill-development of rural artisans engaged in traditional handloom weaving and pottery work across selected districts of India.
- C. Health-insurance coverage for informal-sector workers engaged in unorganised employment, including construction and domestic work.
- D. Digital-payment infrastructure rollout in tier-3 cities to deepen the adoption of UPI and card-based settlements at retail.

24. The author of the novel 'The God of Small Things', winner of the 1997 Booker Prize, is:

- A. Kiran Desai
- B. Jhumpa Lahiri
- C. Anita Desai
- D. Arundhati Roy

25. The currency of Vietnam is the:

- A. Dong
- B. Baht
- C. Ringgit
- D. Kyat

26. The landmark judgment in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973) is best known for establishing:

- A. The doctrine of pleasure under Article 311 on these facts.
- B. The doctrine of basic structure of the Constitution.
- C. The doctrine of colourable legislation.
- D. The doctrine of harmonious construction.