Daily RC & CR Sheet — 9 June 2026

20 Qs · 30 Min
+1 / −0.25

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) — THE REVIVAL OF INDIA'S INLAND WATERWAYS — Q1–5

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

For most of the last half-century India's rivers have moved water but rarely freight. Roads carried nearly two-thirds of long-haul cargo and railways the remainder; inland waterways accounted for less than two per cent of the modal mix, even though many of India's largest manufacturing belts sit within a hundred kilometres of a navigable river. The Jal Marg Vikas Project, approved in 2014 and operationalised in stages along National Waterway 1 — the 1,620-kilometre Haldia-to-Varanasi stretch of the Ganga — was the first serious attempt in a generation to reverse this neglect. By 2025 it had funded multi-modal terminals at Varanasi, Sahibganj and Haldia, dredged channels to a guaranteed least-available depth, deployed inland-vessel automatic identification systems, and supported a fleet of low-draft barges.

The economic case is straightforward. Per tonne-kilometre, river transport is cheaper than rail and almost half the cost of road. Cement, fertiliser, coal, food-grain and over-dimensional project cargo are particularly suited to barging because they tolerate slower transit times. The Inland Waterways Authority of India, which administers the national waterways notified under the 2016 Act, has steadily expanded the network from five waterways to more than a hundred, although only a handful are commercially active.

The ecological calculus is more contested. Dredging deepens channels but disturbs riverbed habitats; widening fairways can erode banks; barge traffic raises sediment plumes and underwater noise that affect the Gangetic dolphin and several catfish species. Civil-society groups have pressed for an environmental cap on traffic density and for restrictions on night-time movement in dolphin habitats. The Authority has, in response, mandated propeller-guard fittings and seasonal speed limits in identified stretches.

The deeper question is whether waterways can compete commercially without continuing public subsidy. Critics argue that the per-tonne savings disappear once first-mile and last-mile road haulage costs are added; supporters reply that integrating waterways into a true multi-modal grid is the point, and that the alternative — letting expressways absorb every additional tonne — is neither sustainable nor cheap when the carbon price is internalised.

1. Which of the following best captures the CENTRAL argument of the passage?

◯ **A.** Inland waterways are uniformly cheaper than road and rail and ought to displace both in long-haul cargo movement
◯ **B.** Road transport remains India's dominant freight mode and the Jal Marg Vikas Project has failed to alter that pattern in any measurable way
◯ **C.** Environmental harm from dredging and barging makes any expansion of inland waterway transport in India indefensible on cost grounds
◯ **D.** After a half-century of neglect, India's waterways are being revived as a cheaper but ecologically contested third mode for long-haul cargo

2. The author cites the share of waterways at 'less than two per cent of the modal mix' chiefly in order to:

◯ **A.** Suggest that no further expansion of the national-waterways network beyond NW-1 is economically justifiable on the available evidence
◯ **B.** Establish that road transport will continue to dominate Indian logistics regardless of any reform attempted at the Centre
◯ **C.** Imply that railway freight has shrunk in proportion to overall cargo movement during the period under reference in the circumstances described above
◯ **D.** Underline how disproportionately under-used river transport was

3. Which of the following can be MOST RELIABLY INFERRED from paragraphs 2 and 3 taken together?

◯ **A.** All hundred-plus national waterways notified after the 2016 Act are now in commercial use carrying cement, coal and fertiliser
◯ **B.** The cost advantage of barging is so large that no class of cargo is unsuited to inland waterway transport in India today
◯ **C.** The Inland Waterways Authority has, in its responses to environmental concerns, treated dolphin habitats as warranting some operational restriction
◯ **D.** The Authority has refused to impose any ecological caps on waterway traffic notwithstanding pressure from civil-society groups

4. The phrase 'the carbon price is internalised' in the final paragraph functions in the argument as:

◯ **A.** A premise that strengthens the supporters' case by suggesting expressway expansion is cheap only when its true climate cost is ignored
◯ **B.** A rhetorical aside with no real bearing on the comparison between road and waterway transport offered in that paragraph
◯ **C.** A statement of fact that the Government of India has formally adopted a carbon-pricing regime for transport infrastructure
◯ **D.** A concession that waterway transport is more polluting than road and must therefore subsidise its carbon emissions

5. Which of the following, if true, would MOST WEAKEN the supporters' position as set out in the final paragraph?

◯ **A.** Evidence that, once first-mile and last-mile road haulage and storage costs are added, barge-based routes are systematically costlier than expressway haulage even after carbon pricing
◯ **B.** Findings that road-freight diesel demand has reduced in corridors served by an operational multi-modal terminal on the Ganga waterway
◯ **C.** Data showing that the Gangetic dolphin population has stabilised in stretches where seasonal speed limits and propeller guards have been enforced
◯ **D.** An independent study showing that, even with first-mile and last-mile costs included, integrated waterway routes save 20 per cent per tonne over pure-road haulage

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PASSAGE 2 (RC) — DEEP-SEA MINING AND THE GOVERNANCE OF THE COMMON HERITAGE Q6–10

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

Two miles below the sunlit surface of the Pacific lies a treeless plain studded with potato-sized lumps of ore. These polymetallic nodules contain nickel, cobalt, copper and manganese in proportions that battery manufacturers find irresistible. For more than thirty years, the International Seabed Authority — a body established by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea — has issued exploration licences over these abyssal plains while it negotiates a mining code that would govern eventual commercial extraction. The abyss has remained, in principle, the 'common heritage of mankind', a status meant to ensure that any benefits from its exploitation are shared equitably with developing States, especially landlocked and geographically disadvantaged ones.

In 2021 the small Pacific island nation of Nauru triggered an obscure provision of the Convention by formally notifying the Authority of its intent to apply, through a sponsored contractor, for a commercial licence. The provision, the so-called 'two-year rule', required the Authority to finalise the mining code within twenty-four months or else process the application under such rules as were then in existence. The Authority missed the deadline in July 2023. The legal effect of that miss is contested. Some States argue that no commercial mining can lawfully begin until the code is adopted; others read the Convention as permitting provisional licences subject to environmental safeguards.

The scientific case for caution is unusually strong. The abyssal seabed is one of the slowest-recovering ecosystems on Earth: nodules grow at rates measured in millimetres per million years, and the sediment plumes that nodule-collection vehicles raise can smother filter-feeders far beyond the immediate mining site. Indigenous communities across the Pacific have invoked customary rights over ocean territory and opposed any extractive activity, arguing that the 'common heritage' principle was never meant to license irreversible harm.

The contest now playing out at the Authority is therefore not only an environmental one but a question about how an international commons should be governed when its benefits and harms fall on radically different constituencies.

6. Which of the following BEST states the central concern of the passage?

◯ **A.** The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has wholly failed to regulate the abyssal seabed in any practically meaningful manner

◯ **B.** Polymetallic nodules contain critical battery metals and their extraction is now technically possible at industrial scale across the Pacific

◯ **C.** The contested governance of deep-sea mining at the International Seabed Authority is a test case for how a global commons should be managed

◯ **D.** Indigenous Pacific communities have successfully blocked all proposed deep-sea mining in international waters around their territories

7. The 'two-year rule' invoked by Nauru in 2021 functions in the argument as:

◯ **A.** A precedent confirming that landlocked and geographically disadvantaged States control the licensing process under the Convention

◯ **B.** An optional procedural device that the Authority routinely uses to certify environmental impact assessments before issuing exploration permits

◯ **C.** A formal moratorium that prohibits any State or sponsored contractor from applying for a commercial mining licence in international waters

◯ **D.** A trigger that placed the Authority under a treaty deadline to finalise the mining code, the lapse of which has now produced legal ambiguity

8. Which of the following can be RELIABLY INFERRED from paragraph 3?

◯ **A.** Nodule-collection vehicles inflict harm confined entirely to the small patches of seabed they directly traverse without any wider effect

◯ **B.** Indigenous communities in the Pacific have unanimously accepted the Authority's interpretation of the 'common heritage' principle in this context

◯ **C.** Damage to the abyssal seabed is unusually long-lasting because the nodules and the ecosystems around them recover only on geological time-scales

◯ **D.** Sediment plumes from nodule mining are scientifically known to dissipate within months and to leave the surrounding filter-feeders unaffected

9. The phrase 'common heritage of mankind' is used in the passage chiefly to:

◯ **A.** Convey that benefits from the deep seabed are meant to be shared equitably and not appropriated by individual States or sponsored contractors

◯ **B.** Emphasise that the deep seabed has been allocated as national territory of the coastal States of the Pacific including Nauru in particular

◯ **C.** Suggest that the deep seabed is, on the Convention's express terms, fully open to commercial mining under existing rules without further conditions

◯ **D.** Show that the Convention regards indigenous customary rights over the deep ocean as the controlling legal standard for any seabed activity

10. Which of the following, if true, would MOST STRENGTHEN the position of those States that argue commercial mining cannot lawfully begin until the mining code is adopted?

◯ **A.** A formal opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea holding that the 'common heritage' principle requires an adopted code as a precondition to any commercial extraction

◯ **B.** Independent geological surveys finding that polymetallic nodules are more abundant in the Pacific than previously estimated by industry analysts

◯ **C.** Evidence that battery-metal demand can be largely met from terrestrial mining for the next two decades without recourse to seabed nodules

◯ **D.** Findings that nodule-collection vehicles can be redesigned to substantially reduce the sediment plumes their operations are known to raise

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — CASTE-CENSUS DATA AND THE REVIEW OF OBC QUOTAS Q11–15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11–15.

Since the Bihar caste survey of 2024 made the political demand for a national caste enumeration unavoidable, advocates have argued that the 27% reservation for Other Backward Classes in central employment and education must be reviewed in the light of the new numbers. Their argument runs as follows.

Reservation quotas are not arbitrary percentages: the Mandal Commission settled on 27% in 1980 by estimating the OBC population at roughly 52% of the national population and then capping the quota at the constitutional ceiling of 50% set down by the Supreme Court in Indra Sawhney. The estimate was derived from the 1931 census — the last census in which caste, beyond Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, was enumerated — adjusted by demographic guesswork. If the Bihar survey is read as a credible signal, the OBC share is materially higher today than the Mandal estimate suggested, and the share of dominant sub-castes within the OBC category is uneven. Both facts, the argument concludes, mean that the quantum and the internal allocation of the 27% quota are now resting on demonstrably stale and partly false foundations.

Three premises support the argument. First, a quota purportedly proportionate to population must, by its own logic, adjust when the population estimate that justified it is shown to be materially wrong. Second, sub-categorisation within reserved groups is constitutionally permitted, as the Supreme Court reaffirmed in State of Punjab v Davinder Singh (2024), and a fresh data base would allow Parliament to identify the most disadvantaged sub-groups for sub-quotas. Third, the political legitimacy of the quota itself depends on its perceived alignment with empirical reality; sustaining a 1980 estimate forty-five years on weakens public consent.

The argument therefore concludes that, once a credible national caste-census data set is available, an automatic statutory review of the OBC reservation framework — both its size and its internal allocation — must follow as a matter of constitutional good faith.

11. Which of the following BEST states the conclusion of the argument?

◯ **A.** The Indra Sawhney ceiling of 50 per cent on total reservations should be removed in light of the Bihar caste survey of 2024

◯ **B.** The Mandal Commission's 1980 estimate of the OBC population at 52 per cent was a demonstrable factual error from the outset of the reservation regime

◯ **C.** Once a credible national caste-census data set is available, the size and internal allocation of the OBC reservation must be the subject of a statutory review

◯ **D.** The 27 per cent OBC reservation must be repealed entirely as it is no longer supported by reliable contemporary population data on the OBC category

12. Which of the following is NOT a premise used by the argument in support of its conclusion?

◯ **A.** Reservations in private-sector employment must accompany any review of public-sector OBC quotas to preserve the credibility of the policy regime

◯ **B.** A quota presented as proportionate to population must adjust if the population estimate that justified it is shown to be materially wrong

◯ **C.** The political legitimacy of a reservation depends on its perceived alignment with empirical reality and stale estimates erode public consent over time

◯ **D.** Sub-categorisation within reserved groups is constitutionally permitted as the Supreme Court reaffirmed in State of Punjab v Davinder Singh (2024)

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

◯ **A.** The Bihar caste survey of 2024 used a methodology that was independently shown to systematically under-count non-OBC categories and to inflate OBC headcounts

◯ **B.** The 27 per cent OBC quota in central jobs has historically been substantially under-utilised because of unfilled vacancies and carry-forward shortfalls

◯ **C.** The Mandal Commission's report itself acknowledged that its 52 per cent estimate would need periodic updating in light of fresh enumeration data

◯ **D.** Several State governments have voluntarily commissioned their own caste surveys in 2024 and 2025 reporting figures broadly consistent with each other

14. The argument's reliance on State of Punjab v Davinder Singh (2024) functions chiefly as:

◯ **A.** A constitutional anchor that establishes the permissibility of sub-categorising reserved groups so that a fresh data set can yield workable sub-quotas

◯ **B.** An authority that conclusively settles the precise quantum of the OBC reservation at 27 per cent for the entire foreseeable future of policy

◯ **C.** A precedent that bars any judicial review of legislative choices on the design and quantum of OBC reservation made by the central legislature

◯ **D.** A binding direction that requires Parliament to extend OBC reservations to all private sector employment within a fixed statutory timeline

15. Which of the following assumptions, if FALSE, would MOST UNDERMINE the inference that the Mandal estimate is 'demonstrably stale'?

◯ **A.** That the OBC share of the population has materially changed since the 1980 Mandal estimate rather than remaining within a narrow band around it

◯ **B.** That credible caste-census data of national scope can in fact be produced through a properly designed national-level enumeration exercise

◯ **C.** That the 1931 census was the last enumeration to record caste beyond Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the manner the argument describes

◯ **D.** That sub-categorisation within reserved groups is constitutionally permitted under the principles laid down by recent Supreme Court rulings

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — MANDATORY DISCLOSURE OF AI USE IN HIRING Q16–20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

Regulators on both sides of the Atlantic are converging on a basic proposition: when an artificial-intelligence system is used to screen, rank or shortlist candidates for employment, every shortlisted applicant should be told. The European Union's AI Act, classifying recruitment algorithms as 'high-risk' systems, requires disclosure and human oversight; the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has issued guidance treating algorithmic bias in hiring as actionable under existing civil-rights law. India is debating a similar disclosure rule.

The argument for mandatory candidate-facing disclosure proceeds in three steps.

First, autonomy. A candidate evaluating a job offer is making a consequential life decision; whether the offer reflects a human recruiter's judgment or an automated score materially affects how the candidate weighs the signal. Concealing the role of the algorithm denies the candidate information that bears directly on their choice and treats them as a passive object of the recruitment process rather than as an active participant in it.

Second, error-correction. Automated screening systems are known to produce systematic errors — penalising career gaps, mis-reading non-English-medium credentials, or down-ranking accents in voice screens. Without notice that an algorithm has been used, an unsuccessful candidate cannot meaningfully request reconsideration, supply context that the system missed, or seek redress under anti-discrimination law. Disclosure activates an error-correction loop that the employer too benefits from, because it surfaces the kinds of false negatives that erode hiring quality over time.

Third, public trust. Hiring is the moment at which an organisation's claims about merit and fairness meet the labour market most directly. If employers conceal the use of AI screening, every subsequent allegation of bias becomes more credible, even where the underlying system is in fact unbiased. Transparent disclosure is therefore in the long-run interest of employers, because it converts speculation about algorithmic discrimination into a verifiable factual question.

The argument concludes that legislatures should impose a mandatory disclosure rule on employers that uses AI to screen or rank shortlisted applicants, the disclosure to be made to each such applicant in clear and intelligible language at the point of shortlisting or rejection.

16. Which of the following BEST states the conclusion of the argument?

◯ **A.** Employers should voluntarily inform applicants when artificial-intelligence systems are used in any stage of the hiring process for any role

◯ **B.** Legislatures should impose a mandatory rule requiring employers to disclose AI use in screening or ranking to each shortlisted applicant in clear language

◯ **C.** All forms of algorithmic hiring should be prohibited until artificial-intelligence systems have been shown to be entirely free of bias on any axis

◯ **D.** The European Union's AI Act and EEOC guidance together establish the only legitimate global standard for the regulation of AI in employment

17. Which of the following is NOT a premise used by the argument in support of its conclusion?

◯ **A.** Concealment of AI use makes every subsequent allegation of bias more credible, eroding public trust in hiring even where systems are in fact unbiased

◯ **B.** Automated screening systems are known to produce systematic errors and disclosure activates an error-correction loop that benefits the employer too

◯ **C.** Employers should be required to publish the full mathematical specifications of every algorithm they use in shortlisting or ranking candidates for any role

◯ **D.** Concealing the role of an algorithm denies the candidate information bearing directly on a consequential life decision they are about to take

18. Which of the following, if true, would MOST WEAKEN the argument?

◯ **A.** The European Union's AI Act treats recruitment algorithms as high-risk systems and requires both disclosure and human oversight in deployment

◯ **B.** Many Indian information-technology services companies have voluntarily begun disclosing AI use in their hiring processes without any formal regulatory requirement

◯ **C.** Independent audits show that disclosure of AI use makes candidates significantly more likely to abandon job applications, harming both candidates and employers alike

◯ **D.** Several jurisdictions in the United States are debating whether to extend EEOC guidance into binding rules on algorithmic accountability in hiring

19. The argument's reasoning under the head of 'error-correction' assumes that:

◯ **A.** An unsuccessful candidate who is informed that AI has been used in the screening will be able to identify and contest specific errors the system has made

◯ **B.** Algorithmic hiring systems are systematically more biased than human recruiters and should therefore be replaced by human screening in every recruitment

◯ **C.** Employers have a constitutional duty to disclose the full source code of any algorithm used in employment decisions to every shortlisted candidate

◯ **D.** All forms of employment discrimination can be eliminated solely by requiring transparent disclosure of AI use to every candidate in the hiring funnel

20. Which of the following BEST identifies a counter-consideration the argument has NOT addressed?

◯ **A.** That algorithmic systems are capable of producing systematic errors that disadvantage candidates with non-traditional educational and career backgrounds

◯ **B.** That the European Union's AI Act explicitly classifies recruitment algorithms as high-risk systems and accordingly requires both disclosure and oversight

◯ **C.** That candidates ordinarily prefer human recruiters over algorithmic screening when given a choice between the two modes of assessment in a hiring process

◯ **D.** That disclosure of AI use might reveal commercially sensitive details of an employer's recruitment toolkit and weaken legitimate business confidentiality