

ANSWER KEY — 7 JULY 2026

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
B	C	D	C	D	B	A	D	B	A
Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
A	D	A	D	A	C	B	A	D	B
Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
A	C	B	C	B	B	D	C	A	C
Q31	Q32								
D	C								

RC PASSAGES

Q1 B

The passage's central claim is that forgetting is a designed, adaptive feature the brain performs deliberately, serving interference prevention, generalisation, and emotional regulation, not a passive defect. Treating all forgetting as pathological ignores the adaptive purposes described, insisting on permanent retention contradicts the argument that curation aids function, and calling cortisol-linked forgetting harmful misreads it as a mechanism that serves useful ends within a regulated system. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q2 C

The passage states directly that forgetting supports generalisation by letting the brain abstract a durable rule, such as recognising a dog, instead of clinging to every encountered instance, which matches the correct option precisely. Deleting all category knowledge misstates the mechanism, strengthening every connection equally contradicts the described pruning of low-value connections, and attributing generalisation entirely to cortisol confuses a separate mechanism tied to stress and emotional memory retrieval. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q3 D

The sentence contrasts a system that retains everything indefinitely with one that curates ruthlessly, discarding the irrelevant so the relevant can be found quickly, which defines the phrase as selective, purposeful discarding rather than indiscriminate loss. Preserving everything equally is the opposite of curation, random deletion without principle contradicts the passage's emphasis on regulated and purposeful forgetting, and limiting the idea to trauma ignores the broader interference and generalisation purposes described earlier. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q4 C

The author explicitly rejects treating forgetting as pure failure while conceding that dementia-related loss is genuinely devastating, showing a stance that corrects the old view with evidence rather than dismissing it outright or expressing alarm. Calling the traditional view wholly without merit overstates the correction, since the author still acknowledges destructive forgetting exists, remaining uncertain contradicts the confident claims about adaptive purposes, and no alarm is expressed anywhere in the measured, explanatory register of the passage. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q5 D

The passage explicitly distinguishes pathological memory loss in dementia, which is devastating because it strips away identity along with clutter, from regulated adaptive forgetting that discards only the irrelevant, making this the correct inference. Age restriction is never mentioned as the distinguishing factor, equating dementia with normal cortisol-driven suppression ignores the passage's separate treatment of these mechanisms, and speed of onset is not a criterion the author uses to separate the two kinds of forgetting. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q6 B

The passage argues that the spice trade functioned as an early laboratory for globalisation, binding together finance, shipbuilding, and diplomacy, while also revealing a darker undertow of conquest and forced labour from the very beginning. Dating globalisation only from the chartered companies ignores the earlier Arab and Indian trade networks described, attributing exploration purely to curiosity contradicts the stated profit motive, and calling the trade a minor footnote directly contradicts the passage's claim about reshaping empires and institutions. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q7 A

The passage states plainly that when Ottoman expansion disrupted established overland routes in the fifteenth century, European maritime powers were pushed toward audacious alternatives to reach spice-producing regions directly, which is exactly the correct answer. Intermediaries guarded their sources rather than inviting bypass, the passage describes scarcity inflating prices rather than spices becoming cheap, and the chartered companies emerged as a consequence of this trade rather than as its original cause. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q8 D

The sentence explains the phrase directly, noting that the pursuit of nutmeg and cloves frequently justified violent conquest, forced labour, and the destruction of rival networks, which defines the darker undertow as exploitation bound up with the trade's profits. Declining prices are never discussed, navigational difficulty describes a literal challenge rather than a moral undertow, and the eventual fate of the companies is not addressed anywhere in the passage. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q9 B

The closing line states that this history complicates any simple narrative treating global interconnection as a purely modern, purely benign achievement, which is a deliberate caution against an overly comfortable view of globalisation's origins. The passage never praises modern globalisation as superior, it explicitly draws a continuous line between the spice trade and later global systems rather than denying any connection, and it never argues that colonial empires benefited the regions they controlled. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q10 A

The passage credits companies such as the Dutch and English East India companies with developing joint-stock financing, standardised contracts, and armed fleets that anticipated the modern multinational corporation by centuries, making organisational innovation their chief significance. They were chartered, meaning state-backed rather than unauthorised, their purpose was commercial profit rather than cultural exchange, and the passage explicitly links their footholds to colonial empires rather than describing them as uninvolved in territorial expansion. Hence, option (A) is correct.

CR PASSAGES

Q11 A

The proponents' argument rests on the premise that delaying access buys crucial years of emotional maturity, so direct evidence that a short delay measurably lowers anxiety would confirm exactly the mechanism the argument depends on. Adult anxiety from social media does not bear on the age-specific claim, parental consent for bank accounts is an unrelated analogy, and voluntary screen-time reminders are a weaker, unrelated intervention that does not test the delay mechanism at all. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q12 D

The passage argues that enforcement need not be perfect to be worthwhile, since even a partial reduction in early exposure lowers average harm across the whole cohort of children. This only works if imperfect compliance still yields a meaningful aggregate benefit, which is the assumption being made. Claiming universal evasion, denying all privacy risk, or denying any history of enforceable age policy are positions the author never needs or states. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q13 A

The rebuttal depends on the premise that even a partial reduction in exposure meaningfully lowers harm, so if near-universal, near-immediate bypass is documented, there is no meaningful partial reduction left to defend and the whole rebuttal collapses. A small minority following rules without pressure, existing self-reported birthdates, or parental app monitoring do not speak to the scale of bypass and leave the author's central claim untouched. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q14 D

The passage closes by framing the real question as whether children's attention is protected or harvested as a commodity, which only supports banning access if childhood attention specifically warrants distinct protection from the ordinary attention economy that applies to adults. Treating every attention-based business as equally objectionable overgeneralises, denying all capacity for online consent is far stronger than the passage claims, and predicting platform collapse is an unsupported prediction never made. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q15 A

The passage answers the displacement worry not by abandoning the age floor but by pairing it with literacy education and family tools that ease the transition, mirroring a gradual smoking-age rise paired with cessation support that softens the shift rather than imposing it abruptly. Raising prices before a holiday, suspending without support, and raising targets without added resources all impose a burden without any accompanying mitigation, unlike the author's paired approach. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q16 C

The argument claims a car-free centre reclaims space for markets and street life that strengthens local business, so direct evidence of rising footfall and retail sales after a ban confirms exactly this predicted benefit. Suburban commuting patterns describe the status quo rather than the ban's effect, existing truck restrictions are a separate and narrower policy, and minor cyclist injuries are a tangential safety detail that does not bear on the commercial claim. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q17 B

The rebuttal insists that the strongest proposals phase the ban only once alternatives are functioning, so it depends on assuming that adequate transit investment can genuinely be delivered before the ban fully bites, not merely promised. Denying that vulnerable groups rely on cars contradicts the passage's own acknowledgement, asserting current transit superiority overstates the claim, and denying any precedent for phased policy is a sweeping claim the author never makes. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q18 A

The defence depends on transit-first phasing being real and timely, so evidence that promised expansions were repeatedly delayed past the ban's start undercuts the very ordering the author relies on to answer the equity objection. Complaints about longer bus routes are a comfort trade-off rather than a phasing failure, cyclists' street preferences are irrelevant to transit sequencing, and adjusted delivery schedules do not touch the promised-investment timeline at all. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q19 D

The passage closes by framing the centre as a shared commons best allocated by public benefit rather than by who can afford a car, so the argument for a ban stands only if collective allocation is accepted as the governing principle over private purchasing power. Eliminating car ownership nationwide goes far beyond the claim, comparing transit and road costs is never argued, and freezing historic centres unchanged contradicts the passage's call for redirected, not blocked, mobility. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q20 B

The passage answers the displacement worry by pairing the ban with a wider ring of restrictions or improved orbital transit that absorbs relocated trips instead of merely pushing congestion elsewhere, just as the factory adds filters to stop smoke from simply spreading further rather than doing nothing. Extending shop hours and hiring more teachers are responses to rising demand, not to a problem being displaced, and crop rotation addresses a resource cycle, not a shifted burden. Hence, option (B) is correct.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21 A

Barak-8 is a long-range surface-to-air missile system jointly developed by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation and Israel Aerospace Industries, designed to defend against aircraft, helicopters and missiles. It has been inducted into the Indian Navy and Air Force for area air defence. The missile is capable of intercepting threats at ranges of up to around seventy to one hundred kilometres depending on the variant. It reflects the growing defence cooperation between India and Israel in developing advanced indigenous-linked defence technology. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q22 C

The Human Development Index is published annually by the United Nations Development Programme as part of its Human Development Report, first introduced in 1990. It is a composite statistic combining life expectancy at birth, expected and mean years of schooling, and gross national income per capita to rank and compare the overall development of countries beyond mere economic output. The index was developed by economists Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen to shift focus from income alone to broader human wellbeing and capability. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q23 B

The repo rate is the primary policy instrument used by the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee to manage inflation and liquidity in the economy. It refers to the rate at which the central bank lends short-term funds to commercial banks against government securities. A higher repo rate makes borrowing costlier, curbing inflation by reducing money supply, while a lower repo rate encourages borrowing and spending to stimulate growth. The Monetary Policy Committee reviews this rate periodically based on inflation targets and economic conditions. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q24 C

Manu Bhaker won two bronze medals at the Paris 2024 Olympics, in the women's 10 metre air pistol individual event and the mixed 10 metre air pistol team event alongside Sarabjot Singh, becoming the first Indian athlete to win two medals at a single edition of the Olympic Games. Her achievement was widely celebrated as a landmark moment for Indian shooting sport. Avani Lekhara, by contrast, is a celebrated Paralympic shooter who has won multiple gold medals at the Paralympic Games rather than the Olympics. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q25 B

India hosted the eighteenth G20 Summit in New Delhi in September 2023, under its G20 presidency, bringing together leaders of the world's major economies to discuss issues such as global economic cooperation, sustainable development and climate finance. A key outcome of this summit was the adoption of the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration and the induction of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20. The summit was held at the Bharat Mandapam convention centre, which was specially developed for the event. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q26 B

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana was launched in 2015 with the objective of providing affordable pucca housing to eligible urban and rural poor households across India, under its two components, PMAY-Urban and PMAY-Gramin. The scheme provides financial assistance and interest subsidies to beneficiaries for constructing or purchasing homes. It forms part of the government's broader push towards inclusive housing and has been extended over successive phases to expand coverage to a larger number of economically weaker and low-income households. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q27 D

China holds the largest foreign exchange reserves of any country in the world, a position it has maintained for well over a decade, built up largely through its sustained trade surpluses and export-driven economic model. These reserves, held mostly in US dollar-denominated assets, give China significant capacity to manage its currency's exchange rate and meet international payment obligations. Japan and India also maintain substantial reserves, with India's reserves having grown considerably over the past two decades to support currency stability and import cover. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q28 C

The Prompt Corrective Action framework is a regulatory mechanism used by the Reserve Bank of India to monitor banks that breach specified thresholds relating to capital adequacy, asset quality and profitability. Once a bank is placed under this framework, restrictions may be imposed on dividend distribution, branch expansion and lending activities to help restore its financial health before problems escalate into a full-blown crisis. This mechanism is intended to serve as an early warning and corrective tool rather than a punitive measure against struggling banks. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q29 A

K Kasturirangan, a former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, headed the committee that drafted India's National Education Policy 2020, which replaced the previous policy framework from 1986. The policy introduced significant reforms such as a new 5+3+3+4 school structure, multiple entry and exit options in higher education, and greater emphasis on multidisciplinary learning and vocational training. It represents one of the most comprehensive overhauls of the Indian education system in over three decades. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q30 C

The Blue Economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean and marine resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and employment, while preserving the health of marine ecosystems. It encompasses sectors such as fisheries, shipping, marine biotechnology, coastal tourism and renewable ocean energy. India, with its extensive coastline and exclusive economic zone, has increasingly emphasised the Blue Economy in its policy planning, recognising the potential of oceanic resources for long-term economic development balanced against environmental conservation concerns. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q31 D

Himachal Pradesh became the first Indian state to implement a comprehensive ban on plastic bags, introducing strict measures in the early 2000s to curb their use due to environmental concerns in its hilly and ecologically sensitive terrain. The initiative served as an early model for other states considering similar restrictions on single-use plastics. Since then, numerous Indian states and the central government have introduced their own regulations targeting single-use plastic items as part of broader efforts to reduce plastic pollution nationwide. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q32 C

The World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting, popularly known as the Davos Summit after the Swiss town where it is held, brings together heads of state, business executives, and civil society leaders to discuss pressing global economic, social and geopolitical issues. First held in 1971, it has grown into one of the most prominent international gatherings for shaping dialogue on global economic cooperation. Indian delegations regularly participate to showcase investment opportunities and engage with global business leaders. Hence, option (C) is correct.