

ANSWER KEY — 15 OCTOBER 2026

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

LEGAL REASONING

Q1 B Reservation ceiling — constitutional rule vs policy (MED)

In *Indra Sawhney v Union of India* (1992), the Supreme Court's nine-judge bench established that reservation under Article 16(4) cannot ordinarily exceed 50% of available posts or seats, on the ground that the Constitution envisages reservation as an exception and not the rule — and that crossing 50% renders the exception disproportionate enough to violate Article 14's guarantee of equality. The Karnataka HC applied this in its 2026 judgment by rejecting the State's argument that the quantum of historical disadvantage justified exceeding the ceiling. 'Compelling circumstances' under *Indra Sawhney* was never treated as synonymous with 'long-standing non-representation'; it was reserved for geographic and social situations of truly exceptional isolation. Option A is wrong because while legislatures set policy, courts review constitutional conformity and the 50% ceiling is binding constitutional law, not a guideline. Options C and D invent procedural and temporal routes with no constitutional basis.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the trap: students know legislatures have discretion under Article 16(4) and may equate discretion with an unfettered power to set any percentage, overlooking that *Indra Sawhney*'s 50% ceiling is a hard constitutional rule, not a default that policy can override.

Q2 C Indra Sawhney exception — geographic isolation (HARD)

The *Indra Sawhney* majority, while laying down the general 50% ceiling, did carve out a narrow exception for communities situated in remote or geographically isolated areas — its reasoning being that mathematical application of the ceiling to such communities would be self-defeating, as their very isolation prevents meaningful absorption into mainstream State services at the normal percentage. This exception is tightly defined: it requires geographic remoteness or social isolation, not merely a statistical deficit in representation. Option A mischaracterises the exception by making it population-percentage-triggered — the correct test is isolation and practical inaccessibility of representation, not community size. Option B is constitutionally incoherent: Article 356 does not suspend fundamental rights or constitutional ceilings on reservations. Option D invents a parliamentary override mechanism that does not exist; reservation policy is subject to judicial review even after constitutional amendments (see *I.R. Coelho*, 2007).

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the trap: it sounds empirically rigorous and 'policy-based', but it conflates population proportion with the geographic/social isolation exception, which is the correct trigger under *Indra Sawhney*.

Q3 A Article 14 — reasonable classification and reservation (HARD)

Article 14 permits the State to make classifications, but requires that the classification be founded on an intelligible differentia and have a rational nexus to the object of the law. Reservation as a classification has the object of securing adequate representation for historically disadvantaged communities. The 50% ceiling exists precisely because when reservation exceeds 50%, the unreserved category shrinks to such a minority of posts that the rule — open competition and equal treatment — is effectively inverted. At that point, the classification is no longer a proportionate means to the remedial end; it is a disproportionate restructuring of the entire service into a primarily reserved apparatus, which fails the rational-nexus prong of Article 14. Option B conflates Article 14's equality doctrine with an equality-of-outcome notion that the text does not support. Option C is wrong: Article 14 applies to all State action that amounts to unreasonable classification, regardless of whether the beneficiary group is constitutionally recognised. Option D describes a proportionality test that is not the standard Indian courts apply for Article 14 scrutiny of reservation.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the trap: it sounds legally sophisticated by invoking 'proportionality' and a mathematical formula, but Indian Article 14 review does not apply a strict proportionality test between reservation percentage and representation deficit.

Q4 D I.R. Coelho — Ninth Schedule and Basic Structure (ELITE)

I.R. Coelho v State of Tamil Nadu (2007) is the Supreme Court's authoritative ruling on the scope of Ninth Schedule protection after 24 April 1973 — the date the Supreme Court in *Kesavananda Bharati* recognised the Basic Structure doctrine. The *Coelho* bench held that any law inserted into the Ninth Schedule after that date is judicially reviewable if it abrogates or abridges fundamental rights that form a part of the Basic Structure. The equality code under Articles 14, 15 and 16, as elaborated in decisions like *Indra Sawhney*, is part of the

Basic Structure. A law that structurally overrides the 50% ceiling — which the Court in *Indira Sawhney* treated as a constitutional norm essential to meaningful equality — would therefore not be insulated by mere Ninth Schedule inclusion. Option A is factually wrong on the trigger date; it was 24 April 1973 (the *Kesavananda* judgment date), not 1978. Option B correctly identifies that Basic Structure rights remain reviewable but incorrectly draws a distinction between Articles 14/16 and 15, when all three form the equality code. Option C relies on the literal text of Article 31B but ignores that Coelho qualified this text by imposing the Basic Structure override.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option C is the trap: it quotes Article 31B's text accurately and presents the 'blanket protection' argument in a way that seems textually faithful, but students must know that Coelho (2007) created a post-1973 exception to Article 31B's protection for laws that damage the Basic Structure.

Q5 A Offer vs invitation to treat — Indian Contract Act **MED**

The distinction between an offer and an invitation to treat is foundational in contract law. An invitation to treat is a preliminary communication that invites others to make offers; it does not create the power of acceptance. Displaying goods with a price tag in a shop — following the principle from *Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain v Boots Cash Chemists* (1953), adopted in India — is an invitation to treat. The customer's picking up the goods and presenting them to the cashier with a statement of willingness constitutes the offer. The shopkeeper may accept or reject. Under Section 2(a) of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, a proposal requires willingness 'to obtain the assent' of the other side — the display invites offers; it does not make one. Option B wrongly treats a price tag as a binding offer. Option C confuses the Section 7 requirement (acceptance must be absolute) with the identity of who is the offeror. Option D invents a novel three-stage contract formation theory with no statutory basis.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the trap: the everyday intuition that a price tag 'offers' the goods at that price confuses commercial practice with legal offer — students who haven't studied the offer/invitation-to-treat distinction will select B.

Q6 B Counter-offer extinguishes original offer — Section 7 **HARD**

Section 7 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872 requires that acceptance be absolute and unqualified. A conditional or qualified response — one that introduces new terms — operates not as an acceptance but as a counter-offer, which simultaneously (a) rejects the original offer and (b) puts a new offer on the table. The counter-offer extinguishes the offeror's original offer. This principle is illustrated in the English case *Hyde v Wrench* (1840), and Indian courts apply the same rule under Section 7. Since Preethi's first reply conditioned acceptance on delivery and inclusion of the tyre set — two terms not in Malika's offer — it was a counter-offer that killed Malika's ₹8 lakh offer. Preethi's second letter, purporting to accept the original offer unconditionally, had no live offer to attach to, so no contract arose. Option A wrongly characterises the first response as a mere 'request for additional terms', but since it said 'I accept, but only if...', it made acceptance conditional on new terms. Option C invents a 'non-material variation' exception that does not exist in Section 7. Option D confuses promissory estoppel — which shields detrimental reliance on a promise, not a bare desire to contract — with the offer-and-acceptance framework.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the trap: using the language 'I accept' at the start makes many students conclude a valid acceptance was made, ignoring that the conditional clause that follows converts it into a counter-offer under Section 7.

Q7 C Section 25(2) — past voluntary act exception **HARD**

The general rule under Section 2(d) of the Indian Contract Act, 1872 is that consideration must move at the desire of the promisor — an act performed spontaneously without the promisor's request does not normally constitute valid consideration. However, Section 25(2) creates an important statutory exception: an agreement made without consideration is valid when the promise is to compensate, wholly or in part, a person who has already voluntarily done something for the promisor. Nisha voluntarily acted to protect Suresh's property, and Suresh's subsequent promise to pay ₹20,000 is precisely the kind of agreement Section 25(2) is designed to enforce — a gratitude-turned-promise for a voluntary past act in the promisor's benefit. The English common-law past-consideration rule is therefore modified by Section 25(2) in India. Option A correctly states the general rule but ignores the specific statutory exception in Section 25(2). Option B incorrectly treats Section 25 as requiring simultaneity; the very purpose of Section 25(2) is to validate past-act promises. Option D invents a 'moral obligation' doctrine of implied consideration, which Indian courts do not recognise as an independent head.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the trap: it correctly states the general past-consideration rule and sounds authoritative, but students must recall that Section 25(2) is the specific exception — the precise exception that examination setters love to test against the general rule.

Q8 D Section 16 — presumption of undue influence, fiduciary relationships **HARD**

Section 16 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872 defines undue influence as a situation where one party is in a position to dominate the will of the other and uses that position to obtain an unfair advantage. Section 16(2) specifies that a person is presumed to dominate another's will when standing in a fiduciary relationship or holding real or apparent authority, or when dealing with someone whose mental capacity is temporarily or permanently affected by age, illness or mental or bodily distress. Dr. Arvind, as the treating physician of an elderly, bedridden patient entirely dependent on his medical judgments, falls squarely into the fiduciary category and the mental-bodily-distress category. Courts in India presume undue influence in doctor-patient transactions that confer a pecuniary benefit on the physician; the burden then shifts to the physician to rebut the presumption by showing independent will and fairness. Option A wrongly conflates legal disability (minority/unsoundness) with undue influence — Section 16's ambit extends to fiduciary relationships regardless of technical mental capacity. Options B and C wrongly require actual threats, confusing undue influence with coercion under Section 15.

Examiner's note — the trap: Options B and C are the twin traps: they import the coercion/threat requirement from Section 15 into Section 16, which is a doctrinal error. Undue influence is a subtler form of pressure — the power differential and presumption are the key, not express threats.

Q9 A Section 23 — multiple independent grounds of voidness ELITE

Section 23 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872 enumerates six grounds on which consideration or object makes an agreement void: it is forbidden by law; it would defeat the provisions of any law; it is fraudulent; it involves or implies injury to a third party; it is immoral; or it is opposed to public policy. Each ground is independent — the coexistence of multiple grounds does not narrow the court's analysis to one. Here, the prohibited import provides one complete ground (forbidden by law); the plan to bribe a customs officer provides another (fraudulent purpose); and Arjun's active misrepresentation about the import licence, which induced Kiran's consent, makes the contract separately voidable at Kiran's instance under Section 19 for fraud/misrepresentation (Section 17 read with Section 19). Kiran therefore has both a void-contract argument (Section 23, multiple grounds) and a rescission right (Section 19). Option B wrongly treats Section 19's misrepresentation route as the only operative defect — it ignores that Section 23 voids the agreement on the object-illegality ground entirely separately, regardless of consent. Option C invents a 'most prominent illegality' rule of governance that does not exist in the Act. Option D creates a requirement that illegality appear on the face of the written instrument — Indian law applies Section 23 to the real purpose and object of the agreement, not merely what is written.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the elite trap: it correctly identifies the misrepresentation angle under Section 19 and articulates 'consent not caused by' the collateral facts with apparent legal precision, making students feel they have found the subtler answer — but it ignores that Section 23 operates independently on the object, not on consent.

LOGICAL REASONING

Q10 C Main conclusion identification — deductive syllogism EASY

The passage is structured as a deductive syllogism: the major premise establishes a general rule about legal systems that prioritise individual rights; the minor premise applies that general rule to India; the conclusion follows. The main conclusion is the final sentence's core claim — 'the state's power to detain a citizen without judicial oversight is constitutionally constrained' in India. The last sentence of the passage elaborates on the implication of the conclusion, but the conclusion itself is the third step of the syllogism. Option A reads an eternal opposition into the passage that the author does not assert; the passage describes a structural principle of a specific class of legal systems, not a universal antagonism. Option B is stronger than the passage warrants — the passage says detention laws create a 'structural tension', not that they are 'automatically unconstitutional'. Option D adds the requirement of 'judicial authorisation from a constitutional court' and the supremacy of Article 21 over all of Part III, neither of which the passage states.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the near-miss trap: it sounds like the natural implication of the passage, but the passage uses 'necessarily creates structural tension' rather than 'is automatically unconstitutional' — precision in reading the passage's actual claim is tested.

Q11 D Parallel reasoning — structural equivalence of syllogisms HARD

The passage's argument has the following formal structure: (1) All systems that have property X (prioritise individual rights) have consequence Y (constrained detention power). (2) India has property X. (3) Therefore India has consequence Y. This is a valid deductive syllogism in the form: All-X-are-Y; India-is-X; therefore India-is-Y. Option D mirrors this exactly: (1) All administrative systems with property X (procedural fairness as priority) have consequence Y (guaranteed right to be heard). (2) India has property X (administrative law prioritises procedural fairness). (3) Therefore India has consequence Y (adverse-order power is constrained). The structure is identical. Option A adds a superlative ('most comprehensive') not present in the original form. Option B reverses the argument's premises and conclusion — it commits the fallacy of affirming the consequent ('detains → prioritises rights') and then draws an unjustified additional conclusion about court rulings. Option C uses the first premise as a standard but then argues from a different factual basis to a prescriptive conclusion, which does not parallel the descriptive structure of the passage.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the surface trap because it names a real body (EU) and sounds like a valid syllogism; students miss that it adds 'world's most comprehensive' — a superlative not in the original conclusion structure.

Q12 B Strengthening the minor premise — confirming classification membership HARD

The passage's argument hinges on the minor premise: that India's constitutional framework explicitly places individual rights above ordinary state authority, thereby qualifying India as a member of the category described in the major premise. This minor premise could be challenged if someone argued that India's framework does not meet the 'individual rights above collective authority' criterion. Option B directly strengthens the argument by providing authoritative confirmation — from both constitutional scholars and the Supreme Court — that Article 21 does exactly what the minor premise claims: it places individual liberty above ordinary state administrative power, confirming India belongs in the category. Option A provides historical context about the drafting but does not confirm that the criterion is actually met in practice — historical borrowing is not the same as actually prioritising rights. Option C sets out an international classification standard, but the argument does not depend on international recognition; it depends on the internal structure of India's constitutional framework. Option D strengthens the practical importance of the conclusion but does not address whether the premises are established — it is evidence that the conclusion is meaningful, not that the argument's premises are true.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the trap: it sounds like compelling historical evidence connecting India to rights-prioritising systems, but 'borrowed from' does not confirm the framework actually meets the passage's criterion — a drafted right could still be textually subordinated to state authority.

Q13 A Defeating a critic — constrained vs prohibited distinction ELITE

The critic's objection rests on a misreading of the passage's conclusion. The passage concludes that detention power is 'constitutionally constrained' — a formulation that means subjected to constitutional limits and judicial oversight, not that detention laws are categorically impermissible. The existence of laws like AFSPA and UAPA, which have been reviewed and upheld by the Supreme Court subject to constitutional safeguards (for example, periodic judicial review under UAPA, fundamental rights protection under the AFSPA framework), actually confirms the passage's conclusion: the Supreme Court's power of review and the constitutional conditions the court imposed on those statutes ARE the constitutional constraints. The passage does not say constraints mean prohibition. Option B concedes the critic's point and would require abandoning both the major and minor premises — it uses *reductio ad absurdum* wrongly to infer that valid detention laws refute the passage. Option C invents a 'civil detention only' limitation on the major premise that the passage does not state. Option D confuses a drafting imprecision in the last sentence ('necessarily creates structural tension') with a logical flaw in the conclusion; fixing the final sentence's word choice is a rhetorical fix, not a logical one.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the elite trap: it appears analytically sophisticated by identifying the word 'necessarily' as a logical overreach and proposing a precise linguistic fix — students who engage with logical precision may prefer it, missing that the conclusion ('detention power is constrained') is independently valid and the final sentence is not the conclusion.

Q14 D Bold-face function — premise vs conclusion identification MED

In argument analysis, statements can function as premises (grounds for the conclusion), conclusions (what the premises support), or intermediate propositions (background context or counter-considerations). The first bolded sentence — 'This proposal would meaningfully reduce urban carbon emissions over a five-year horizon' — immediately follows the description of the government's proposal and offers an environmental efficiency rationale for it. It is functioning as a supportive premise: it tells the reader why the proposal is worth considering, providing an affirmative reason before the author introduces the equity complications. It is not the main conclusion, which is the final sentence (about weighing both approaches against social equity). Option A misidentifies it as the conclusion. Option B describes the function of a concession or counter-consideration, but this sentence supports the government position rather than conceding anything to critics. Option C describes it as the major premise of an argument that critics are trying to defeat — but the critics' proposal is not aimed at the carbon-reduction claim; they are offering an alternative path to carbon reduction, not disproving the first sentence.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the trap: the sentence is affirmative and placed near the start, leading students to read it as the thesis statement or conclusion; they must distinguish the main conclusion (the balanced final directive) from a supporting premise.

Q15 A Bold-face function — counter-premise against a rival proposal HARD

The second bolded statement arrives immediately after the description of the critics' proposal (a flat fuel-tax increase). The word 'however' signals a concessive pivot — the author acknowledges the critics' alternative and then introduces an objection to it. The objection is equity-based: the fuel tax would fall disproportionately on informal workers dependent on petrol vehicles. This sentence functions as a counter-premise against the critics' proposal: it gives the reader a reason not to simply adopt the fuel-tax alternative. It is this counter-premise that enables the final sentence's conclusion — that the government must weigh both approaches against social equity, not just environmental efficiency. Option B incorrectly identifies it as the main conclusion and claims the author endorses the EV subsidy; the author's conclusion is a balanced directive, not a preference for one side. Option C attributes the sentence to the critics, but the passage presents it as the author's own observation (note: 'A fuel-tax increase, however' — the 'however' is the author's voice). Option D incorrectly treats the two bolded sentences as making the same point; the first supports the government proposal and the second objects to the critics' alternative — they work in opposite directions.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the primary trap: students who read the second bolded sentence as the decisive turning point that settles the argument will conclude it is the main conclusion, failing to notice that the real conclusion is the final, balanced directive.

Q16 B Bold-face logical relationship — rival premises for rival positions HARD

The logical structure of the passage requires understanding that the two bolded statements are not parallel — they support different sides of a policy debate. The first bolded statement serves as a premise favouring the government's EV subsidy proposal: it provides an environmental efficiency rationale. The second bolded statement serves as a premise against the critics' fuel-tax alternative: it provides an equity-harm objection. Neither statement alone is the conclusion. Together, they create the structural foundation for the author's balanced final directive: 'The government must weigh both approaches against their social equity impact, not merely their environmental efficiency.' That conclusion cannot be reached without both premises — the first establishing that the subsidy approach has an environmental upside, the second establishing that the critics' alternative has a distributional downside. Option A incorrectly treats both as premises supporting the same (government's) conclusion. Option C wrongly claims the second bolded sentence refutes the first — the second does not challenge the carbon-reduction claim; it challenges a different (critics') proposal. Option D invents a causal chain between the two sentences that is nowhere in the text.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the structural trap: students who note that both statements are affirmative may classify them as parallel premises supporting the same position, missing that they each support a different side of the debate.

Q17 C Synthesising bold-face functions into the main point ELITE

The passage opens with the government's proposal, immediately provides an environmental argument for it (first bold), then presents the critics' alternative, and immediately introduces an equity objection to it (second bold). The final sentence — 'The government must weigh both approaches against their social equity impact, not merely their environmental efficiency' — is the main point: neither approach is simply right or wrong, and the evaluation criterion should be broadened from efficiency to equity. This is a balanced,

process-oriented conclusion: it does not endorse either side; it says the CRITERION of evaluation must include social distribution. Option A reads the passage as endorsing the government and rejecting the critics, which is not what the author concludes — the author calls for balancing, not a winner. Option B introduces constitutional validity and parliamentary authority, concepts the passage never discusses. Option D attempts a creative synthesis by treating the first bold as conclusion and the second as its condition — but this confuses the function of the bolded statements (premises) with the conclusion (the final directive), and invents a 'compensation scheme' that the passage does not propose.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the elite trap: it attempts to integrate both bolded sentences into a nuanced policy prescription, which sounds analytically impressive and seems to honour both parts of the argument — but it misreads the bolded statements as conclusion + condition rather than as rival-position premises, and adds a 'compensation scheme' the passage does not suggest.

QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

Q18 **B** Mensuration — area of rectangle **MED**

The area of a rectangle is calculated as length $\times$ width. The standard volleyball court is 18 metres long and 9 metres wide. Area = $18 \times 9 = 162$ sq.m. This is the total playing surface. Option A invents an arithmetic involving 'sections' that produces 146, which has no basis in standard area calculation. Option C attempts to add attack zones as extensions beyond the court boundaries, but the attack zones are sub-regions within the 18×9 court — the court's dimensions of 18m already include the attack zone depth on each side. There is no additional area to add. Option D attempts a zone-by-zone decomposition (two attack zones of $3\text{m} \times 9\text{m}$ each = 54 sq.m, plus a central zone of $6\text{m} \times 9\text{m} = 54$ sq.m) arriving at 108 sq.m, then subtracting an invented net-width allowance — this decomposition is internally inconsistent ($2 \times 27 + 54 = 108$ sq.m, not 162 sq.m), revealing an arithmetic error in the internal zones.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option C is the trap: since the passage mentions attack zones (3m per side), students may assume these are extensions beyond the $18\text{m} \times 9\text{m}$ court and try to add them, when they are simply sub-regions within the court.

Q19 **A** Tournament ranking — applying stated tie-break criteria **MED**

Both Eagles and Tigers won 2 matches, creating a tie on the first criterion. The second criterion is sets won: Eagles won 8 sets and Tigers won 7 sets. Eagles have more sets won, so Eagles rank first. This is a direct application of the stated ranking rule — match wins first, then sets won if tied. Option B invents a 'lower total points = better defensive performance' tie-breaker that is not stated in the passage's ranking rule. Option C incorrectly states that Eagles and Tigers are tied on sets won — the data table clearly shows Eagles with 8 sets won versus Tigers' 7, so they are not tied on the second criterion. Option D invents a head-to-head tie-breaker not mentioned in the passage; the ranking rule is exhaustively stated as match wins then sets won.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the trap: head-to-head is a common real-world tie-breaker in volleyball and football, and students may apply it from general knowledge, but the passage explicitly states the ranking rule as match wins then sets won — no head-to-head is mentioned.

Q20 **D** Mensuration — perimeter of combined rectangle **HARD**

The combined attack zone spans from the 3-metre attack line on one side of the net to the 3-metre attack line on the other side, creating a rectangle of total depth 6 metres ($3\text{m} + 3\text{m}$) and width 9 metres. The outer perimeter of this single combined rectangle = $2 \times (\text{length} + \text{width}) = 2 \times (6 + 9) = 2 \times 15 = 30$ metres. At ₹150 per running metre, total cost = $30 \times 150 = ₹4,500$. Option B pads each of the two individual attack zones separately (perimeter of each = $2(3+9) = 24\text{m}$; total = 48m; cost = ₹7,200), but the question asks for the outer boundary of the COMBINED zone as a single continuous rectangle, not two separate zones. Option A invents an area-to-perimeter conversion formula with no mathematical basis. Option C applies a 'GST' multiplier that the question does not mention.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the trap: students who read 'both attack zones' may pad each zone separately ($24\text{m} + 24\text{m} = 48\text{m} \rightarrow ₹7,200$), but the question asks for the outer boundary of the COMBINED zone — a single rectangle with perimeter $2(6+9) = 30\text{m}$.

Q21 **C** Ratio simplification — finding GCD **HARD**

To simplify the ratio 350:392, find the GCD of 350 and 392. Prime factorisation: $350 = 2 \times 5^2 \times 7$ and $392 = 2^3 \times 7^2$. The GCD is the product of common prime factors at their lowest powers: $2^1 \times 7^1 = 14$. Dividing both: $350 \div 14 = 25$; $392 \div 14 = 28$. The fully simplified ratio is 25:28. Option A claims the common factor is 70 — but $350 \div 70 = 5$ and $392 \div 70 = 5.6$, which is not an integer, so 70 is not a common factor of 392. Option B correctly reduces by 2, giving 175:196, but stops before the further division by 7 that yields the fully simplified form. Option D rounds both values by dividing by 50, but $392 \div 50 = 7.84$ is not an integer — rounding to 8 gives an approximate, not an exact, ratio.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the trap: dividing both by 2 gives 175:196, which looks like it could be right to a student who only performs one step of simplification, but the GCD is 14 (2×7), requiring a second division.

Q22 **B** Mensuration — safety margin area and carpeting cost **ELITE**

The court dimensions are $18\text{m} \times 9\text{m}$. Adding the safety margins: the length increases by 5m at each end, so total length = $18 + 5 + 5 = 28\text{m}$. The width increases by 3m on each side, so total width = $9 + 3 + 3 = 15\text{m}$. Total enclosed area = $28 \times 15 = 420$ sq.m. Court area = $18 \times 9 = 162$ sq.m. Safety margin area = $420 - 162 = 258$ sq.m. Cost = $258 \times ₹85 = ₹21,930$. This can also be verified by decomposition: two end strips = $2 \times (5 \times 9) = 90$ sq.m; two side strips = $2 \times (3 \times 18) = 108$ sq.m; four corner pieces = $4 \times (5 \times 3) = 60$ sq.m; total = $90 + 108 + 60 = 258$ sq.m ✓. Option A invents a procurement discount not mentioned in the question. Option C applies a GST multiplier not stated. Option D correctly walks through the strip decomposition to reach ₹21,930 but then deducts a fictional 5% contractor discount — this is the key trap.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the elite trap: it correctly walks through the strip-decomposition method and arrives at exactly ₹21,930 before subtracting a fictional 5% contractor discount, targeting students who have done the calculation correctly but then doubt themselves when they see a different final figure presented with plausible-sounding justification.

Q23 D Electoral arithmetic — votes cast from turnout percentage **MED**

The calculation requires two steps: first, find actual votes cast; then, calculate each candidate's votes from the percentage of votes cast. Total votes cast in Constituency A = $80,000 \times 0.72 = 57,600$. Candidate X votes = $57,600 \times 0.42 = 24,192$. Candidate Y votes = $57,600 \times 0.35 = 20,160$. Winning margin = $24,192 - 20,160 = 4,032$ votes. Option B applies the 7-percentage-point difference to the registered voter base ($80,000 \times 0.07 = 5,600$) rather than actual votes cast, then tries to adjust for turnout, arriving at an incorrect 3,792. Option A applies a confused set of adjustments that produce 3,456 — none of which follow from the data. Option C correctly computes 4,032 but then adds an upward 'rounding adjustment' with no basis.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the trap for students who apply the 7-percentage-point difference to total registered voters (80,000) rather than actual votes cast (57,600) — the most common error is failing to apply the turnout percentage first before computing candidate vote totals.

Q24 C Time-speed-distance — harmonic mean for equal-distance round trip **MED**

When a vehicle covers equal distances at two different speeds, the average speed for the total journey is the harmonic mean of the two speeds, not the arithmetic mean. The harmonic mean formula for two speeds v_1 and v_2 is: average speed = $2v_1v_2 / (v_1 + v_2) = 2 \times 60 \times 80 / (60 + 80) = 9,600 / 140 = 68.571... \approx 68.6$ km/h. Option A uses the arithmetic mean $(60 + 80) / 2 = 70$ km/h — this is only correct when equal TIME (not equal distance) is spent at each speed, which is not the case here since the same 120 km distance is covered at each speed. Option B attempts a weighted average calculation but applies an incorrect formula, arriving at 72.0 km/h. Option D invents a road-gradient adjustment and applies the geometric mean, neither of which the question warrants.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the most common trap: applying the arithmetic mean $(60+80)/2=70$ when the correct formula for equal-distance legs is the harmonic mean. This is one of the most frequently tested time-speed-distance errors in CLAT.

Q25 A Vote transfer arithmetic — re-computing outcome after transfer **HARD**

Candidate Z's votes in Constituency A = $57,600 \times 0.23 = 13,248$ votes. After all of Z's votes are transferred to Y: New Y total = $20,160 + 13,248 = 33,408$ votes. X remains unchanged at 24,192 votes. Z's votes = 0 (all transferred). Outcome: Y now has 33,408 vs X's 24,192. Y wins by $33,408 - 24,192 = 9,216$ votes. Option B claims X still wins despite the transfer — this is arithmetically incorrect. X has 24,192 and Y would have 33,408 after the transfer, so X clearly loses. Option C invents a historical 11% abstention rate that has no basis in the passage — the question explicitly says ALL of Z's votes are transferred. Option D claims a tie based on 'rounding of percentages', but no rounding ambiguity exists in this calculation.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the trap for students who estimate loosely: they may sense that Z's 23% transfer cannot overcome X's 42% dominance, without doing the actual arithmetic. Doing the calculation shows Y overtakes X comfortably.

Q26 C Time-speed-distance — speed required for remaining leg given time constraint **HARD**

Total journey = 120 km in 100 minutes. First 60 km at 70 km/h: time taken = $60/70$ hours = $(6/7) \times 60$ minutes = $360/7$ minutes ≈ 51.43 minutes. Remaining time = $100 - 360/7 = 700/7 - 360/7 = 340/7$ minutes. Converting to hours: $340/7 \div 60 = 340/420 = 17/21$ hours. Required speed for remaining 60 km = $60 \div (17/21) = 60 \times (21/17) = 1,260/17 \approx 74.12$ km/h ≈ 74.1 km/h. Option A incorrectly assumes that maintaining 70 km/h throughout would meet the 100-minute target; at 70 km/h the 120 km journey takes $120/70 \times 60 \approx 102.86$ minutes, which exceeds 100 minutes, so a higher speed is needed. Option B attempts the formula $2 \times$ average speed — first leg speed = $2(72) - 70 = 74$, which gives a close but incorrect answer of 74.0 km/h (the precise answer is 74.1 km/h from the time-subtraction method). Option D applies a 'cushion factor' adjustment with no mathematical basis.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is the trap for students who attempt the harmonic complement formula: they calculate the required average $(120 \div (100/60) = 72$ km/h) and then try $2(72) - 70 = 74$, which is close but not derived correctly; the precise calculation via time subtraction gives 74.1, not 74.0.