Daily RC & CR Sheet — 17 October 2026

20 Qs · 35 Min
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Daily Reading Comprehension & Critical Reasoning
Rotated-genre RC passages and real-argument Critical Reasoning — CLAT-2026 grade. Read each passage and answer from the passage only.
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SECTION — READING COMPREHENSION

READING COMPREHENSION — ARTS & CULTURE · RC BLOCK 1 — ARTS & CULTURE (Q1–Q5)

The transformation of Bharatanatyam from a temple ritual to a concert-hall phenomenon is one of the more consequential — and contested — cultural migrations of twentieth-century India. For centuries, the form was stewarded by devadasis, hereditary practitioners whose lives were consecrated to temple service. Their performances were liturgical events, embedded in cycles of worship and inseparable from the sacred geography of the temple corridor. The art was not entertainment; it was offering.

The nationalist project that gathered force from the late nineteenth century onward viewed the devadasi system through an increasingly hostile lens. Social reformers, many of them upper-caste women seeking to reclaim the art for a respectable middle-class audience, campaigned against the Devadasi Act and succeeded in its abolition in 1947. What followed was a complex double movement: the devadasi community was divested of both its livelihood and its custodianship, while the art form itself was retained, pruned of its sensory ambiguity, and repackaged as classical heritage. Rukmini Devi Arundale's Kalakshetra institution became the institutional engine of this transformation, codifying grammar, costuming, and moral affect.

Scholars such as Avanthi Meduri and Davesh Soneji have argued that what we call classical Bharatanatyam today is, in critical respects, a reinvention — one that erased the performers who built it. The standardisation of the abhinaya vocabulary, the shift from the erotically charged srngara to a devotional register, the movement from temple mandapas to proscenium stages — each change served the ideological needs of post-colonial respectability more than the aesthetic continuity of the tradition. The very term 'classical,' as Soneji observes, was borrowed from the European category rather than drawn from the tradition's own self-understanding, performing a kind of epistemic overwrite that the dancers themselves had never sought.

Yet the story resists simple verdict. Contemporary practitioners routinely engage with devadasi repertoire, recovering marginalised compositions and staging them alongside newer work. Some performers self-consciously occupy the tension between heritage and invention, treating the Sadir archive not as a lost authentic origin but as a living provocation. Whether this constitutes restoration, appropriation, or creative dialogue remains genuinely contested — and that contestation is itself evidence that the art form carries more historical weight than its concert-stage polish might suggest.

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

◯ **A.** The codification of Bharatanatyam as a classical form involved both the preservation of the art and the marginalisation of its original custodians
◯ **B.** The transformation of Bharatanatyam from temple to concert hall was a smooth and largely uncontested cultural evolution driven by nationalist reformers who sought a wider audience
◯ **C.** Rukmini Devi Arundale's Kalakshetra institution successfully democratised Bharatanatyam by opening it to wider audiences
◯ **D.** Contemporary practitioners have fully restored the devadasi tradition to its original spiritual and aesthetic form

2. The passage states that devadasi performances in temples were primarily characterised as:

◯ **A.** Pedagogical demonstrations intended to train younger performers in classical grammar
◯ **B.** Liturgical acts of worship inseparable from the sacred geography of the temple corridor
◯ **C.** Aesthetic entertainment designed for the pleasure of royal patrons and aristocratic visitors
◯ **D.** Commercial performances commissioned by temple trustees for annual public festivals

3. Based on the passage, what does the phrase 'pruned of its sensory ambiguity' most likely mean in context?

◯ **A.** Bharatanatyam's physical intensity and demanding technical vocabulary were reduced and simplified to make it more accessible to non-hereditary middle-class performers seeking to enter the tradition
◯ **B.** The repertoire was edited to remove mythological stories that reformers considered morally offensive
◯ **C.** The erotic and multi-register emotional content of the original tradition was removed to satisfy reformist ideals of respectability
◯ **D.** Temple acoustics were replaced by proscenium staging in order to improve sound clarity for urban audiences

4. The author's tone when describing the social reform movement that led to the abolition of the Devadasi Act is best described as:

◯ **A.** Celebratory and approving, because the reform movement succeeded in liberating devadasi women from an exploitative and hereditary system of service and opened the art to a broader public
◯ **B.** Dismissive, because the reformers lacked appreciation for the artistic depth of the tradition
◯ **C.** Neutral and non-committal, presenting reform and tradition as equally weighted considerations
◯ **D.** Analytical and critical, acknowledging the reform's stated goals while foregrounding its dispossessive consequences

5. The final paragraph's reference to the 'Sadir archive' functions primarily to:

◯ **A.** Establish that devadasi compositions are superior in aesthetic merit to post-reform Bharatanatyam
◯ **B.** Validate the scholarly arguments of Avanthi Meduri and Davesh Soneji about the reinvention of the form
◯ **C.** Suggest that contemporary Bharatanatyam practitioners have wholly abandoned the concert-stage version of the form and reverted entirely to the pre-reform temple performance tradition
◯ **D.** Illustrate that engagement with marginalised repertoire can resist fixed narratives of either loss or appropriation

READING COMPREHENSION — ENVIRONMENT & NATURE · RC BLOCK 2 — ENVIRONMENT & NATURE (Q6–Q10)

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in December 2022, represents the most ambitious multilateral attempt yet to arrest the sixth mass extinction. Its headline target — protecting 30 percent of the planet's land and oceans by 2030, the so-called '30x30' commitment — has been welcomed by conservation organisations as a historic turning point. Yet behind the c consensus lies a set of unresolved tensions that could determine whether the framework translates into ecological outcomes o a monument to aspirational accounting.

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The first tension concerns the geometry of protection. Declaring 30 percent of land as protected area is ecologically meaningless if those areas are biogeographically fragmented, isolated from one another, or concentrated in landscapes that were already empty of biodiversity pressure. Connectivity between reserves — the ability of species to migrate, disperse, and respond to climate-induced range shifts — matters as much as the total area figure. India's Project Tiger has demonstrated this with some clarity: tiger corridors linking forest patches have proved essential to genetic viability, yet corridor land sits almost entirely outside formal protected area boundaries and thus outside the accounting logic of 30x30. This is not a peripheral gap: India's biodiversity hotspots are precisely the transition zones between forest patches, not the core reserves, making corridor exclusion not a technicality but a structural failure of the framework's geometric logic.

The second tension concerns who pays and who decides. Indigenous and local communities occupy or manage roughly 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity. Fortress conservation models, which exclude human habitation from protected zones, have a documented history of dispossession in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and parts of India. Frameworks that count territory without counting governance risk replicating these harms at scale. The Kunming-Montreal text does include language about rights-based approaches and the role of indigenous knowledge, but these provisions lack enforcement teeth.

Rewilding — the reintroduction of functionally extinct megafauna to restore trophic cascades — offers a different conceptual register. Where Yellowstone's wolf reintroduction demonstrably altered river morphology through behavioural changes in elk, such interventions suggest that ecological function, not acreage, is the true metric of success. The GBF's emphasis on quantitative targets may, paradoxically, undermine this more demanding standard.

6. What is the primary argument the author advances about the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?

◯ **A.** The GBF is a thoroughly well-designed multilateral instrument that will effectively reverse global biodiversity loss by 2030 provided that signatory nations commit adequate domestic funding and enforcement capacity

◯ **B.** The 30x30 target is ecologically insufficient unless accompanied by connectivity, governance rights, and functional-outcome metrics

◯ **C.** Indigenous communities represent the main obstacle to the framework's effective implementation at the national level

◯ **D.** Rewilding programmes like Yellowstone's wolf reintroduction should fully replace area-based conservation targets

7. According to the passage, what does India's Project Tiger most directly illustrate about the 30x30 framework?

◯ **A.** That national governments can unilaterally exceed the 30x30 target without waiting for multilateral agreement

◯ **B.** That tiger populations inside formally designated protected area boundaries have declined significantly even as the total acreage of those reserves was expanded over recent decades

◯ **C.** That connectivity corridors essential to species viability fall almost entirely outside the framework's accounting logic

◯ **D.** That wildlife corridor maintenance costs exceed those of establishing large contiguous protected reserves

8. In the passage, the phrase 'fortress conservation models' describes approaches that:

◯ **A.** Deploy advanced surveillance and anti-poaching technology to secure protected area boundaries

◯ **B.** Restrict developing nations from exploiting natural resources within internationally designated biodiversity zones

◯ **C.** Impose criminal penalties on local communities that encroach upon officially gazetted forest land

◯ **D.** Protect biodiversity by excluding human habitation and use from designated conservation zones

9. The author's overall attitude toward the '30x30' target is best described as:

◯ **A.** Sceptical of its framing, arguing that quantitative targets may obscure deeper failures of ecological function and governance

◯ **B.** Unreservedly supportive of both the headline target and its underlying quantitative logic, on the grounds that any net increase in the area of formally protected land is ecologically beneficial regardless of location

◯ **C.** Strongly opposed, because the framework would replicate the dispossession associated with fortress conservation

◯ **D.** Cautiously optimistic, contingent only on the formal incorporation of corridor land into protected area accounting

10. Which inference about the Yellowstone wolf reintroduction is most strongly supported by the passage?

◯ **A.** It demonstrates that reintroducing apex predators such as wolves always produces measurable and lasting improvements in river morphology and ecosystem structure wherever such programmes are attempted

◯ **B.** It should serve as the direct policy template for India's approach to tiger corridor management

◯ **C.** It suggests that ecological function and trophic interaction may be a better measure of conservation success than protected area acreage

◯ **D.** It proves that rewilding is a more cost-effective strategy than the formal designation of new protected areas

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — POLITICAL ECONOMY · CR BLOCK 1 — POLITICAL ECONOMY (Q11–Q15)

The intellectual case for a Universal Basic Income rests on a deceptively simple premise: that unconditional cash transfers to all citizens are more efficient, more dignified, and more responsive to technological disruption than the existing patchwork of categorical welfare programmes. Proponents argue that by collapsing dozens of means-tested schemes into a single universal payment, governments eliminate both administrative friction and the poverty trap — the perverse incentive structure in which earning marginally more income causes a disproportionate loss of benefits.

The empirical evidence from pilot programmes, however, tells a more complicated story. The Finland experiment of 2017-2018, which provided 560 euros per month to two thousand unemployed citizens, found improvements in wellbeing and mental health but no statistically significant increase in employment rates. Critics interpret this as evidence that income security does not, by itself, drive the structural changes — in skills, in geography, in social capital — that determine labour market participation. The income effect may be real while the substitution effect remains inert. Some economists draw a sharper conclusion: if income security does not change labour market behaviour, it is a consumption supplement, not a structural reform — and its design should be evaluated accordingly, on welfare grounds rather than labour-market ones.

The fiscal arithmetic compounds these doubts. A genuinely universal payment at a subsistence level in a country like Indi[illegible] population of 1.4 billion, would require expenditure equivalent to several times the current social sector budget. Funding i[illegible] redistribution alone implies either significant tax increases on the middle class or the abolition of in-kind transfers — subsid[illegible] fuel, healthcare — that disproportionately benefit the poor in ways that cash does not.

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The deeper structural argument cuts the other way. Gig economy expansion and AI-driven automation are concentrating returns to capital while labour's share of national income declines in nearly every major economy. Categorical welfare was designed for a world of stable employment relationships; it cannot adapt quickly enough to precarious, platform-mediated work. A UBI provides a floor below which no worker can fall regardless of how the labour market is restructured — and that insurance function may justify its cost in ways that employment rate metrics cannot capture.

11. Which of the following best states the main conclusion the passage ultimately defends?

◯ **A.** UBI is preferable to categorical welfare primarily because it eliminates means-testing and reduces administrative overhead
◯ **B.** The Finland pilot definitively demonstrates that UBI raises wellbeing but cannot be justified on fiscal grounds in large economies
◯ **C.** Despite fiscal challenges and mixed employment evidence, UBI's insurance function in an era of automation may justify its cost
◯ **D.** Categorical welfare programmes are superior to UBI because in-kind transfers reach the poor more effectively than cash

12. The passage's argument for UBI depends on which of the following unstated assumptions?

◯ **A.** That the Finland pilot results are directly transferable to all national contexts without adjustment for scale or structure
◯ **B.** That the existing categorical welfare system can be abolished alongside UBI without producing any welfare loss for current recipients
◯ **C.** That governments already possess the data infrastructure required to administer means-tested programmes effectively
◯ **D.** That the structural disruptions caused by gig economy growth and automation will continue or intensify rather than self-correct

13. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument for UBI?

◯ **A.** A 2023 study finds that cash transfers in Kenya significantly increase entrepreneurship rates among low-income recipients
◯ **B.** In-kind food subsidies in India are found to be significantly leakage-prone, with approximately 40 percent of grain consistently failing to reach its intended beneficiaries due to corruption and logistical failures
◯ **C.** The administrative cost of running 47 separate welfare schemes in India exceeds 15 percent of total welfare expenditure
◯ **D.** Long-term evidence from multiple countries shows that workers displaced by automation retrain and find equivalent employment within eighteen months

14. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the case made in the passage's final paragraph?

◯ **A.** Evidence from Brazil's Bolsa Familia programme confirms that conditional cash transfers significantly increase school enrolment
◯ **B.** Research demonstrates that AI-driven automation is projected to displace 30 percent of current jobs within ten years while creating only 15 percent in new categories
◯ **C.** An Indian government audit finds that UBI pilots in three districts reduced infant mortality rates by 12 percent over two years
◯ **D.** A new OECD report shows that platform-based and gig work currently accounts for fewer than 3 percent of total employment across all surveyed economies and has shown no growth trend over the past five years

15. The author defines the 'poverty trap' as:

◯ **A.** The labour market withdrawal effect that occurs when UBI recipients lose the incentive to seek paid employment
◯ **B.** The fiscal impossibility of funding universal transfers at subsistence level in a large and populous economy
◯ **C.** The structural concentration of capital returns that results when AI-driven automation systematically reduces labour's share of national income across all major economies over time
◯ **D.** The perverse incentive in means-tested welfare whereby earning marginally more triggers a disproportionate loss of benefits

CRITICAL REASONING — SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY · CR BLOCK 2 — SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY (Q16–Q20)

The regulatory debate over artificial general intelligence has reached a peculiar impasse: those with the greatest technical capacity to assess risk are also those with the greatest financial incentive to minimise it. The European Union's AI Act, which came into force in 2024, attempts to resolve this conflict of interest through a risk-tiered framework — classifying applications by their potential for harm and imposing compliance obligations accordingly. This is a sensible structural choice, but the framework contains a systemic flaw that its architects do not fully acknowledge.

The AI Act's risk classifications depend primarily on the declared use case of a system at the point of deployment. A language model deployed for document summarisation is classified differently from one deployed for credit scoring. The problem is that large foundation models are not single-use tools. Once a sufficiently capable model is released — whether via API or open weights — its downstream applications proliferate beyond any regulator's cataloguing capacity. The regulatory unit is the declared application; the risk unit is the underlying capability. These are not the same thing. A model trained for translation can generate disinformation; one trained for code review can automate cyberattacks. The gap between declared purpose and latent capacity is not hypothetical — it is the default condition of capable foundation models.

Proponents of the Act argue that liability provisions will create incentives for deployers to self-classify responsibly and for developers to conduct thorough pre-deployment testing. This argument assumes that the costs of non-compliance will be salient enough to override commercial pressure — an assumption that has rarely held in technology markets where enforcement lags innovation by several years. The Act's penalties are formidable on paper; their deterrent effect depends on regulators acquiring interpretive capacity faster than models acquire capability.

The alternative is capability-based licensing: requiring that any model exceeding defined performance thresholds on standardised evaluations be subject to mandatory review before deployment. Critics argue this would freeze innovation in the hands of incumbents who can absorb compliance costs. But the asymmetry of risk runs the other direction. Regulatory frameworks built on use-case declarations will systematically underestimate capability risk, leaving the most consequential governance gap precisely at the frontier where oversight matters most.

16. What is the main conclusion the author reaches about the EU AI Act?

◯ **A.** The AI Act is a well-designed framework that will regulate AI effectively if sufficient enforcement resources are allocated
◯ **B.** The AI Act's use-case classification system contains a structural flaw that will systematically underestimate the risks of capable foundation models
◯ **C.** The conflict of interest between AI developers and regulators makes any effective regulatory framework in this domain
◯ **D.** Capability-based licensing is currently premature and unworkable because no reliable, internationally agreed standardi evaluation benchmarks for measuring AI system capabilities yet exist

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17. The author's central argument depends on which of the following assumptions?

◯ **A.** That the EU has sufficient jurisdictional authority to enforce the AI Act against non-European AI developers

◯ **B.** That open-weights AI models released publicly are inherently more dangerous and harder to control than equivalent models deployed via closed API systems with access controls

◯ **C.** That the penalties stipulated in the AI Act are categorically insufficient to deter large technology companies

◯ **D.** That a large foundation model's actual capabilities extend meaningfully beyond its single declared deployment use case

18. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument against use-case-based classification?

◯ **A.** The EU's General Data Protection Regulation has generated over 4 billion euros in fines since 2018, showing EU enforcement is credible

◯ **B.** Several major AI developers have voluntarily published detailed pre-deployment safety evaluations ahead of the Act's enforcement deadlines

◯ **C.** Capability-based licensing frameworks have been proposed in the United States Congress but rejected on constitutional grounds

◯ **D.** A comprehensive audit of AI deployments in Europe finds that 95 percent of commercial models remain within their declared use cases throughout their operational lifespan

19. Which of the following most strengthens the author's case for capability-based licensing over use-case classification?

◯ **A.** A study finds that AI regulators in the United States, the EU, and Japan collectively hired fewer than 200 technical specialists in 2023

◯ **B.** Multiple incumbent AI firms publicly endorse capability-based licensing, viewing it as a barrier to entry against smaller competitors

◯ **C.** The EU AI Act explicitly exempts open-source models from its highest-risk category regardless of their capability level

◯ **D.** Research shows that a language model trained for weather prediction was repurposed, without modification, to automate fraudulent financial claims within six months of its release

20. The author acknowledges the objection that capability-based licensing would 'freeze innovation in the hands of incumbents.' What is the author's rebuttal to this objection?

◯ **A.** The author concedes the incumbency concern is valid and concludes that a hybrid regulatory model combining use-case classification with optional capability thresholds is therefore more appropriate than either approach alone

◯ **B.** The author argues that incumbents can absorb compliance costs better than startups and should therefore be subject to higher scrutiny

◯ **C.** The author contends that the risk asymmetry favours precaution: use-case frameworks will systematically underestimate risk at the frontier where oversight matters most

◯ **D.** The author dismisses the incumbency concern as a lobbying argument by firms that have already achieved dominant market positions

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