Daily RC & CR Sheet — 25 October 2026

20 Qs · 35 Min
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Daily Reading Comprehension & Critical Reasoning
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SECTION — READING COMPREHENSION

READING COMPREHENSION — POLITICS & GOVERNANCE · THE SOVEREIGN PARADOX: PARLIAMENTARY SUPREMACY AND JUDICIAL REVIEW IN INDIA (Q1–Q5)

The relationship between Parliament and the Supreme Court of India is not merely a functional division of labour — it is a constitutionally embedded tension that periodically surfaces in moments of institutional confrontation. Unlike the British model, where parliamentary sovereignty admits of no higher norm, India's Constitution simultaneously grants Parliament the power to amend the foundational document and vests in the Supreme Court the authority to adjudicate the scope of that very power. The result is a paradox that no constitutional text can cleanly resolve.

The critical fault line was exposed in Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973), where a thirteen-judge bench held, by the slenderest of majorities, that Parliament's amending power under Article 368 is not unlimited. Certain features — the 'basic structure' of the Constitution — cannot be abrogated even by a constitutional amendment. The doctrine did not enumerate those features exhaustively; it left that task to future benches reading the spirit rather than the letter of the document. This interpretive latitude is simultaneously the doctrine's genius and its vulnerability: it gives the Court flexibility but also invites the charge that judges are substituting their preferences for democratic will.

Proponents of judicial review argue that a constitution without enforceable limits is merely a political declaration. If Parliament could amend away the right to equality or dissolve an independent judiciary, the document would offer citizens no secure protection against majoritarian excess. The Court's role, on this view, is not counter-majoritarian but counter-cyclical — a check that operates precisely when legislative majorities are most likely to err.

Critics offer a sharper rejoinder. They contend that the basic structure doctrine hands unelected judges a veto over democratically ratified choices, with no textual anchor and no mechanism for democratic override. The doctrine's content evolves through judicial pronouncements — in National Citizens Register litigation, in electoral bond rulings — raising the question of whether constitutional interpretation has imperceptibly shaded into constitutional legislation.

The tension is perhaps irresolvable by design. A constitution that is genuinely supreme must restrain its own authors; yet the institution assigned that restraint must itself remain accountable. India navigates this dilemma through political convention, institutional comity, and the occasional crisis that resets the equilibrium between the branches without ever definitively settling it.

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

- ◯ **A.** India's constitution embeds an irreducible tension between Parliament and the judiciary, navigated through political convention
- ◯ **B.** The Supreme Court has accumulated disproportionate power by expanding the basic structure doctrine well beyond what the 1973
- ◯ **C.** Parliamentary sovereignty is fundamentally incompatible with robust judicial review, and India must ultimately choose one
- ◯ **D.** The Kesavananda ruling was a constitutional error that grafted an undemocratic judicial veto onto India's order and should be too

2. The author's description of the basic structure doctrine as simultaneously 'its genius and its vulnerability' most nearly implies that the doctrine:

- ◯ **A.** The bench deliberately kept the doctrine vague so that future courts could expand or contract its scope freely without any
- ◯ **B.** The doctrine provides a fixed enumerated list of constitutional essentials that shields citizens from legislative excess while
- ◯ **C.** The doctrine gains practical strength from its open-endedness but simultaneously exposes the Court to the charge that it
- ◯ **D.** The doctrine functions well during periods of political stability but becomes operationally incoherent during constitutional

3. The phrase 'counter-cyclical' as used in the passage most accurately means that the Court:

- ◯ **A.** The Court scales its constitutional scrutiny upward during crises and relaxes when Parliament acts responsibly, intervening in
- ◯ **B.** The Court functions as a corrective specifically at junctures when legislative majorities are most prone to constitutional
- ◯ **C.** The Court deliberately spaces its major constitutional pronouncements to allow democratic processes to stabilise before
- ◯ **D.** The Court alternates between deference to Parliament and assertive review in cycles that scholars can identify retrospectively

4. The critics' objection to the basic structure doctrine, as presented in the passage, would be MOST effectively rebutted by which of the following arguments?

- ◯ **A.** The Court's constitutional judgments have historically been overturned by parliamentary amendment at an extremely low rate,
- ◯ **B.** Judicial review of constitutional amendments is practised in Germany, South Africa, and the United States, demonstrating that
- ◯ **C.** The doctrine has a clear textual basis in the Preamble's commitment to justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity — values that
- ◯ **D.** The doctrine protects the very conditions — free elections, judicial independence, fundamental rights — without which

5. What is the primary function of the final paragraph in the passage?

- ◯ **A.** The paragraph accepts that the tension is constitutionally irresolvable and describes equilibrium as maintained through
- ◯ **B.** The paragraph offers the author's resolution, concluding that India's political conventions have successfully harmonised the
- ◯ **C.** The paragraph argues normatively that the Court should voluntarily limit the scope of its review powers in order to restore
- ◯ **D.** The paragraph shifts focus to electoral politics, arguing that Parliament's composition rather than the content of judicial

READING COMPREHENSION — LITERARY FICTION · THE ELDER'S COURTYARD (Q6–Q10)

The courtyard of Sitaram Shukla's house had not changed in forty years — the same cracked plaster around the neem tree, the same low parapet where men gathered at dusk to speak without speaking. But on the evening Ananya returned with her letter of admission to the National Law University, the courtyard held a silence it had not produced before.

"She wants to study law," her mother said to Sitaram, not as information but as accusation.

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Sitaram was seventy-two and had lived long enough to know that the things people brought to his courtyard were never about what they said they were about. Ananya's mother wanted him to tell her daughter what she could not — that the world had shapes, and one did not press oneself into the wrong one.

He watched the girl. She sat with her hands folded in her lap, too still for innocence, which meant she was holding something back. He recognised that stillness. It was the stillness of a person who has already decided.

"Come here," he said.

She crossed the courtyard and sat before him. She was twenty, and her eyes carried the exhaustion of someone arguing with people who will not hear.

"Tell me what a lawyer does," he said.

She blinked. "They argue cases. They defend rights. They —"

"No," he said. "Tell me what a lawyer does."

She looked at him then, not past him. "They give people who have no voice a way to be heard."

Sitaram was quiet. He thought of his own daughter, married at seventeen, who had learned to shrink herself so efficiently that she now took up almost no space in any room she entered. He had not stopped it. He had told himself he was honouring tradition. He understood, now, that he had been honouring his own comfort.

"Your mother thinks the city will change you," he said.

"The city already has."

"I know." He looked at the admission letter she still held. "That is not why she is afraid."

Ananya said nothing. She had stopped needing him to name the reason — she needed only to know whether he would stand in the way of it.

Sitaram reached into his kurta pocket and produced a pen — a cheap ballpoint, the kind used for signing government forms. He placed it on the letter without a word.

Her mother, watching from the doorway, made a sound that was not quite a word.

6. Ananya's characterisation as having 'the stillness of a person who has already decided' primarily serves to establish that she:

◯ **A.** Ananya is performing deference to the elder while privately harbouring contempt for traditional authority, a contradiction th overall

◯ **B.** Ananya has internally resolved her course of action before the mediation begins and seeks a blessing or validation from Sitaram

◯ **C.** Ananya is emotionally overwhelmed by sustained family opposition and has become passive, and Sitaram's patient questioning is

◯ **D.** Ananya has deliberately adopted a posture of receptivity, calculating that this approach will maximise the probability that

7. The narrative technique of repeating Sitaram's question — 'Tell me what a lawyer does' — twice with only 'No' between them most effectively achieves which of the following?

◯ **A.** The repetition creates a comic effect by highlighting Sitaram's impatience with Ananya, suggesting that even his celebrated

◯ **B.** The technique marks Sitaram's transition to active advocacy, signalling that he has already decided in Ananya's favour and is

◯ **C.** The repetition underscores intergenerational miscommunication by showing that even a wise elder cannot clearly articulate his

◯ **D.** The technique signals that Sitaram is testing Ananya not for factual knowledge but for a values-based understanding of the

8. Based on the passage, which of the following can be most reasonably inferred about Sitaram's internal reasoning when he places the pen on the letter?

◯ **A.** Sitaram acts on an impulse of affection rather than a considered moral position, and the passage deliberately leaves ambiguous indeed

◯ **B.** Sitaram performs a strategically ambiguous act of mediation that allows him to support Ananya without openly confronting the

◯ **C.** Sitaram is privately reconciling his earlier failure to act on behalf of his own daughter, making the pen on the letter as much

◯ **D.** Sitaram recognises that the mother's true fear is losing her daughter to an unknown world, and his gesture is designed

9. The tone of the passage is best described as:

◯ **A.** The tone is measured and quietly elegiac — the prose holds the scene's moral weight in restraint, letting silence and small

◯ **B.** The tone is satirical and detached — the narrator deploys sustained irony to expose village elders who perform wisdom while

◯ **C.** The tone is nostalgic and elegiac — the passage mourns a passing way of life, reading both Ananya's ambition and her mother's

◯ **D.** The tone is celebratory and didactic — the narrative drives toward a clear moral lesson about the superiority of modern

10. The author's primary purpose in depicting the mother's final reaction — 'a sound that was not quite a word' — is most likely to:

◯ **A.** The sound confirms the mother's opposition has finally collapsed and she has accepted the elder's decision, the ambiguity of

◯ **B.** The author suggests that the mother's emotional response exceeds what language can contain, leaving her grief and her love

◯ **C.** The reaction signals that the mother will reopen the dispute in private, using her visible distress as leverage to persuade her

◯ **D.** The sound establishes an ironic counterpoint to Ananya's calm, implying that tradition's defeat reduces its custodians to an

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — SOCIETY & CULTURE · ALGORITHMIC ENCLOSURE: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA MANUFACTURES POLITICAL POLARISATION (Q11–Q15)

A widely held assumption about social media holds that it should, in principle, reduce political polarisation by exposing citizens to the full diversity of opinion that exists in their societies. The logic seems intuitive: platforms connect billions of people, and individuals who inhabit homogeneous offline social networks ought to encounter challenging viewpoints through their online feeds that they would never meet in a neighbourhood or a workplace.

The empirical evidence, however, points in a sharply different direction. Polarisation — measured as the distance between median partisans on policy attitudes — has accelerated in precisely the decades during which social media penetration has risen mo
The correlation is not coincidental. It is the product of a deliberate architectural choice: recommendation algorithms that op
engagement, and the content that maximally engages is content that provokes.

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Engagement-maximising algorithms do not simply reflect users' existing preferences; they actively reshape those preferences over time. A user who clicks on one mildly partisan video is served progressively more extreme content in the same ideological direction, because more extreme content generates stronger emotional reactions and longer viewing times. The algorithm does not care about the user's epistemic health — it cares about the next click. The result, aggregated across hundreds of millions of users, is a systematic drift toward the ideological extremes.

This process is compounded by the structural properties of social networks themselves. Political content that arouses outrage spreads faster and further than content that informs or persuades. Sharing is not an act of reflection; it is an act of social signalling — communicating one's tribal affiliations and moral commitments to a peer network. Outrage-sharing performs a function analogous to the rituals of in-group solidarity in pre-digital communities, but at a scale and velocity that earlier communities could not have sustained.

The consequence is that social media users inhabit what researchers have termed 'epistemic bubbles' — informational environments in which the range of viewpoints they encounter has been pre-filtered by the platform's logic. These bubbles are not self-constructed by users who choose to avoid dissenting views; they are algorithmically imposed. The distinction is morally significant: a citizen who chooses not to read opposing newspapers is exercising autonomy; a citizen whose feed is curated to exclude opposing views without their knowledge is being manipulated. The platform has become a political actor — shaping the electorate's informational environment with no democratic mandate or accountability.

11. Which of the following best identifies the main conclusion of the argument presented in the passage?

◯ **A.** Social media has failed to reduce polarisation primarily because most users deliberately avoid challenging content, preferring
◯ **B.** The correlation between social media growth and rising polarisation is empirically significant but causation remains
◯ **C.** Social media has deepened political polarisation through algorithmically engineered recommendation systems that progressively
◯ **D.** Political outrage spreads faster than informative content on social media, and this asymmetry can be corrected through

12. The argument depends most critically on which of the following unstated assumptions?

◯ **A.** Social media companies are fully aware of their algorithms' polarising effects and deliberately maintain them because the high more
◯ **B.** Attitude surveys reliably reflect genuine shifts in citizens' political beliefs rather than artefacts of changing survey
◯ **C.** Political polarisation is inherently harmful to democratic governance and cannot serve any legitimate democratic function such
◯ **D.** Engagement algorithms are the primary driver of users' ideological drift, rather than users independently seeking more extreme

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

◯ **A.** Large-scale user-tracking studies find algorithmic exposure correlates with attitude moderation rather than extremism, because
◯ **B.** Platforms that voluntarily introduced features surfacing ideologically diverse content saw no measurable reduction in political
◯ **C.** Political scientists have documented rising polarisation in countries with very low social media penetration, suggesting
◯ **D.** Users reporting the highest levels of political outrage on social media also consume the greatest volume of traditional news

14. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the argument's central claim?

◯ **A.** Surveys find that social media users are more likely than non-users to have changed their minds on a political issue in the
◯ **B.** Leaked internal platform research reveals the algorithm knowingly amplifies borderline content — stopping just short of policy
◯ **C.** Countries that have required platforms to disclose their recommendation logic have experienced a short-term decrease in user
◯ **D.** Historical studies of pre-digital partisan newspapers find levels of ideological selectivity in readership broadly comparable here

15. The argument draws a moral distinction between a user who 'chooses not to read opposing newspapers' and one whose feed is 'curated to exclude opposing views without their knowledge'. The primary logical flaw in using this distinction to conclude that platforms are political actors without democratic mandates is that it:

◯ **A.** The argument conflates editorial curation — which newspapers and broadcasters have always practised — with algorithmic
◯ **B.** The argument overstates the epistemic harm caused by informational bubbles by assuming that exposure to opposing views reliably at all
◯ **C.** The argument assumes without demonstration that users lack meaningful awareness of or control over the curation of their feeds,
◯ **D.** The argument ignores the possibility that the platform's curation reflects an emergent aggregate of its users' own preferences

CRITICAL REASONING — HEALTH POLICY · RIGHTS ON PAPER: THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP IN INDIA'S MENTAL HEALTHCARE ACT, 2017 (Q16–Q20)

The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 represents one of the most progressive legislative interventions in India's public health history. It grants every person the right to access mental health care, establishes the right to confidentiality, creates advance directives for persons experiencing mental illness, and — most significantly — shifts the legal framework from a custodial model to a rights-based model. On paper, persons with mental illness are no longer patients to be controlled; they are right-holders to be served.

The gap between this legislative aspiration and operational reality, however, is not merely large — it is of a magnitude that renders the Act's rights practically unenforceable for the vast majority of those they are designed to protect. India has approximately 0.3 psychiatrists and 0.07 psychologists per 100,000 population, against the World Health Organization's recommended ratio of 3 per 100,000. More than 80 percent of districts lack a single government psychiatrist. The 750-bed District Mental Health Programme targets originally set for the Twelfth Plan were not met even at the aggregated national level by the commencement of the Fifteenth Finance Commission cycle.

The Act mandates the establishment of Mental Health Review Boards in every district to adjudicate disputes about treatment and admission. But the Centre's own compliance reports concede that fewer than half the required Boards had been constituted three years after the Act's commencement. Those that do function often lack trained legal personnel capable of engaging with the rights-based framework the Act introduces. A right to review that cannot be exercised is not a safeguard — it is a notation in a statute.

This gap is not incidental. It reflects a structural feature of Indian social legislation: the enactment of ambitious rights instruments that generate political and reputational capital for legislators without the corresponding fiscal commitments to the delivery systems those rights require. Mental health receives less than one percent of India's total health budget, a figure that has remained stubbornly constant across successive plan periods despite the enactment of the 2017 Act.

The conclusion follows directly: the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, whatever its normative merit, is an under-funded mar cannot deliver on its statutory promises. In the absence of a substantial and sustained reallocation of public health resourc

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the institutional infrastructure the Act presupposes — the Act is not a health policy: a statement of aspiration backed by law but unsupported by the resources that governance requires.

16. Which of the following most accurately states the main conclusion of the argument in the passage?

◯ **A.** The Act should be repealed and replaced with a more modest legislative framework that matches India's current public health
◯ **B.** India's political culture systematically produces normatively ambitious but institutionally hollow rights legislation because
◯ **C.** India's under-investment in mental health results from social stigma rather than from political design, making public awareness
◯ **D.** The Act fails to function as operative health policy because its rights-based framework is not supported by the institutional

17. The argument's claim that the implementation gap is 'not incidental' depends most critically on the assumption that:

◯ **A.** The pattern of enacting ambitious legislation without corresponding fiscal commitments is a deliberate strategic choice rather
◯ **B.** The legislators who drafted the 2017 Act were aware at the time of enactment that the required institutional infrastructure did
◯ **C.** The figure of 0.3 psychiatrists per 100,000 accurately reflects genuine service availability and is not distorted by systematic
◯ **D.** The Mental Health Review Boards, had they been constituted as required, would have functioned effectively to vindicate the

18. Which of the following, if true, would most substantially weaken the argument that the Act cannot deliver on its statutory promises?

◯ **A.** Several state governments have independently passed supplementary mental health legislation allocating state-level funds to
◯ **B.** The Union Ministry of Health has announced a five-year National Mental Health Mission with a dedicated budget allocation
◯ **C.** Studies in comparable developing economies show that rights-based mental health legislation, even enacted ahead of
◯ **D.** The private mental health sector in India has expanded rapidly since 2017, and a substantial and growing proportion of persons

19. Which of the following, if established, would most strengthen the argument's conclusion?

◯ **A.** Longitudinal data shows that in states where Mental Health Review Boards have been constituted and are fully functional, the thus
◯ **B.** The proportion of India's total health budget allocated to mental health has remained below one percent for each of the seven
◯ **C.** Expert committees convened by the Union Ministry of Health have formally recommended substantially increased mental health
◯ **D.** Research published in leading peer-reviewed public health journals has concluded that the 2017 Act's advance directive

20. The author's characterisation of the Act as 'a statement of aspiration with the force of law but not the resources of governance' reflects which of the following logical relationships?

◯ **A.** The characterisation reflects a false dichotomy — the author incorrectly assumes a statute must be either fully funded or
◯ **B.** The characterisation reflects a category error — the author conflates governance resources with legislative efficacy, when in
◯ **C.** The characterisation overgeneralises — it applies accurately to rural districts but cannot be sustained as a description of the
◯ **D.** The characterisation is a valid inference from the evidence presented — the passage has established both the resource gap and

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