Daily RC & CR Sheet — 3 November 2026

20 Qs · 35 Min
+1 / −0.25

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 — LAW & SOCIETY · PUBLIC INTEREST, PUBLIC VOICE (Q1–Q5)

For three decades after the Constitution came into force, an Indian court ordinarily heard a grievance only from the person who had suffered it. The rule of standing, inherited from English practice, rested on a sensible fear: that a court open to every stranger would drown in disputes belonging to no one in particular. The poor, however, had their own difficulty with it. A bonded labourer in a quarry or a prisoner forgotten in a district jail could not afford a lawyer, could not reach a court, and often did not know a right had been violated.

The change came in the late 1970s. In Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (1979), prompted by newspaper reports on undertrials who had languished in jail for years, the Supreme Court took up the matter at the instance of an advocate who was not himself a prisoner. Justices P.N. Bhagwati and V.R. Krishna Iyer read the right to a speedy trial into Article 21, and in later cases allowed a letter or postcard to be treated as a writ petition. Standing, in their account, was not the private property of the injured but a means of reaching justice; where the injured could not move the court, a public-spirited person could do so for them.

The experiment has been praised and attacked with equal vigour. Admirers point to orders that freed bonded labourers, cleaned polluted rivers and compelled the state to feed the hungry. Critics reply that a court which supervises drains and emission norms lacks both the expertise and the accountability of an elected body, and that its orders are rarely monitored as energetically as they were issued. The jurisdiction has also been abused: petitions filed for publicity, private grudges or commercial rivalry have cluttered dockets, and the Court itself has warned, in State of Uttaranchal v. Balwant Singh Chaufal (2010), that it must not become a tool for personal gain.

What survives is less a verdict than a caution. The relaxation of standing was justified by the helplessness of those it was meant to serve; wherever that helplessness is absent, the justification weakens, and the court is entitled to ask whom the petitioner speaks for and what he stands to gain. A doctrine born of the humility of a judiciary that wished to listen to the voiceless must be guarded against the confidence of one that begins to speak for everyone.

1. Which of the following best expresses the central idea of the passage?

◯ **A.** Public interest litigation has been so widely abused that the Supreme Court should now restore the older rule of standing in full
◯ **B.** Standing was relaxed because the helpless could not reach the courts, so the jurisdiction needs restraint where that need is absent
◯ **C.** The English rule of standing was an inherited error that has been properly replaced by a system open to every public-spirited petitioner
◯ **D.** Justices Bhagwati and Krishna Iyer built a jurisdiction whose benefits for the poor have been conclusively confirmed by its later record

2. Which inference about Hussainara Khatoon is best supported by the passage?

◯ **A.** The Court held that every undertrial who has outlasted the maximum sentence for his offence is entitled to monetary compensation from the state
◯ **B.** The petition was admitted only because newspaper reports are accepted as conclusive evidence of facts in proceedings under the Constitution
◯ **C.** The advocate who approached the Court succeeded because he had himself once been an undertrial and could speak with that authority
◯ **D.** The Court treated the identity of the petitioner as less important than the plight of the prisoners on whose behalf the petition was brought

3. The author's attitude toward public interest litigation is best described as

◯ **A.** approving of its origins while wary of the way it has been used since
◯ **B.** hostile to its origins but approving of the restraint later urged on it
◯ **C.** detached from both its admirers and its critics throughout the passage
◯ **D.** enthusiastic about its results and impatient with those who question it

4. In the final sentence, 'the confidence of a judiciary that begins to speak for everyone' most nearly refers to

◯ **A.** a reasonable trust in the quality of the evidence placed before it
◯ **B.** a calm reliance on settled precedent in deciding difficult disputes
◯ **C.** an assertiveness that risks taking the court beyond its role
◯ **D.** an optimism that the public will cooperate with the orders it makes

5. The fourth paragraph serves chiefly to

◯ **A.** restate the criticisms of the preceding paragraph and add several further objections of its own
◯ **B.** draw a qualified conclusion from the competing assessments set out in the preceding paragraph
◯ **C.** introduce a fresh example that reverses the argument developed through the earlier paragraphs
◯ **D.** defend the English rule of standing against the reforms described in the second paragraph

READING COMPREHENSION — HISTORY · A SUM FIXED FOR EVER (Q6–Q10)

In 1793 Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General, announced that the land revenue demanded from the zamindars of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa would be fixed for ever. Until then, the Company had collected revenue through short-term arrangements, auctioning the right to collect for a year or a few years at a time, and had watched the countryside suffer for it. The new arrangement was meant to end that instability: a zamindar whose obligation would never change had reason to invest in his estate, and a government whose inco not fall could plan its expenditure.

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The settlement did more than fix a sum. It recognised the zamindar as proprietor of the land, a status he had not held in that form under Mughal practice, where his office was closer to a hereditary collector's, with customary claims on a share of the produce. The cultivators, whose rights rested on custom, were left to bargain with a landlord who now had the law on his side. The demand was fixed at a high figure and enforced through the sunset law: an estate whose instalment had not reached the treasury by sunset on the appointed day was liable to be sold at auction.

The consequences ran against the intentions. Many old zamindars, unable to meet the demand in a bad season, lost their estates within a generation, and the buyers were often merchants and officials of Calcutta with no tradition of managing land. Rents rose, and the gap between the sum paid to the Company and the sum collected from the peasant filled with sub-tenures. Because the demand stayed fixed while prices and cultivation rose, the Company's share of the produce shrank, and it turned to other systems elsewhere: the ryotwari settlement associated with Thomas Munro in Madras, and the mahalwari system in the North-Western Provinces, in which revenue was settled with the cultivator or the village and was open to periodic revision.

Historians still debate what it achieved. Older accounts credited it with creating a loyal landed class that stood by British rule; later work stresses that the landlords were often absentee and indebted, and that loyalty could not be bought by a legal title alone. What is less contested is its long shadow. The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 tried to protect occupancy rights, and the system ended only after independence, when the states abolished the zamindari intermediaries.

6. The passage is primarily concerned with

◯ **A.** the purpose, working and unintended results of a fixed land revenue settlement, and the continuing argument about its significance

◯ **B.** the contrast between Mughal and British methods of revenue collection and the reasons the British methods proved superior in practice

◯ **C.** the career of Lord Cornwallis as Governor-General and the administrative reforms associated with his time in office across India

◯ **D.** the origin of the zamindari class under the Mughals and the process by which that class was later displaced by Calcutta merchants

7. Which inference about the zamindar before 1793 is best supported by the passage?

◯ **A.** His payments to the Company were fixed and unchanging, which is why he was unwilling to invest in the improvement of his estate

◯ **B.** His estate was liable to be sold at sunset whenever an instalment was late, a harshness that the new arrangement was intended to remove

◯ **C.** His claim to the land rested on custom and office, so recognising him as proprietor changed his legal standing

◯ **D.** His relations with the cultivators were purely commercial, so the new arrangement left their position wholly unchanged in every respect

8. The author's treatment of the older view that the Settlement created a loyal landed class is best described as

◯ **A.** dismissive of it as a convenient myth that no serious historian has ever advanced or defended

◯ **B.** supportive of it as the only account that explains the survival of British rule through the century

◯ **C.** indifferent to it because the author regards the question of loyalty as irrelevant to the Settlement

◯ **D.** respectful of its place in earlier scholarship but persuaded that later work has qualified it

9. In the sentence 'an estate whose instalment had not reached the treasury by sunset on the appointed day was liable to be sold at auction', 'liable' most nearly means

◯ **A.** legally exposed to the prospect of being

◯ **B.** morally answerable for the consequences of being

◯ **C.** certain in every instance to end up being

◯ **D.** economically attractive as a candidate for being

10. The author mentions the ryotwari and mahalwari systems in order to

◯ **A.** argue that the two systems were administered more fairly than the Permanent Settlement ever was

◯ **B.** suggest that the zamindari class was dismantled in Madras and the North-Western Provinces before 1885

◯ **C.** show that the weakness of a fixed demand led the Company to prefer revisable settlements elsewhere

◯ **D.** explain why the sunset law was withdrawn in Bengal once cultivators began to bargain with landlords

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — LAW & RIGHTS · THE RELEASE THAT WAITS FOR A REQUEST (Q11–Q15)

Every year the prison statistics of India repeat a figure that should embarrass a system committed to the presumption of innocence: roughly three in four of the people held in its jails have not been convicted of anything. They are undertrials, awaiting a trial that may begin late, proceed slowly and end in acquittal long after the time they would have served had they been found guilty. The law is not silent. Section 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, inserted in 2005, entitles an undertrial who has spent half the maximum sentence for the offence in custody to be released on a personal bond, and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, which replaced the Code in 2024, carries the provision forward and shortens the period to one-third for a first-time offender.

Yet the provision has done less than its drafters hoped, not because courts disapprove of it but because it operates only when someone invokes it. An undertrial must know that he qualifies, must find a lawyer able to calculate the days he has spent in custody, and must persuade a court to listen; those who most need the benefit are the ones least able to take these steps. The Supreme Court has in several orders directed that jail authorities identify eligible prisoners and send their names to the courts, and that direction has been followed unevenly.

The remedy proposed by some is to make the entitlement self-executing. Each prison would prepare, every month, a list of undertrials who have crossed the statutory threshold, and the relevant court would consider every name on the list without waiting for an application. Opponents argue that this would add a further burden to courts that already cannot keep pace with their dockets. That objection misunderstands the nature of the work. Calculating eligibility is a clerical task that the prison's own records already make possible, and the judicial decision on each case, whether to release on a bond or to record reasons for continued detention, is brief when it is made on a prepared file. The courts' present burden, by contrast, is the repeated hearing of bail applications that arise only because eligible prisoners remained inside. A system that waits for a request will always release fewer people than the law intends; a system that begins from the record can turn the entitlement into a practice.

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11. Which of the following best states the main conclusion of the argument?

◯ **A.** Section 436A and its successor in the new Sanhita should be repealed because they have failed to reduce the number of undertrials in prison

◯ **B.** Courts that currently neglect the entitlement of eligible undertrials ought to be required to hear every bail application that is filed in a district

◯ **C.** Prisoners who cannot find a lawyer to calculate their days in custody should be released without any scrutiny by a court of their pending cases

◯ **D.** Eligible undertrials will be released reliably only if review begins from prison records and not from the prisoner's application

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

◯ **A.** Most undertrials held beyond the statutory threshold are in fact innocent of the offences with which they stand charged

◯ **B.** The prison's custody records are reliable enough to identify eligible undertrials without further proof from prisoners

◯ **C.** A court will approve at least as many releases from a prepared monthly list as it now does on individual applications

◯ **D.** The legislature intended the provision to apply to every offence in the criminal law, irrespective of its maximum punishment

13. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the author's reply to the opponents?

◯ **A.** Deciding each listed case needs a hearing with the prosecution and a check of other cases, taking as long as a contested bail application

◯ **B.** Many prisoners who qualify under the provision are also held in connection with other cases for which no entitlement to release arises at all

◯ **C.** Some jail authorities have been slow to forward the names of eligible prisoners to courts in the districts which they serve across the state

◯ **D.** The Supreme Court has repeatedly directed that eligible prisoners be identified and their names sent to the courts that are competent to release them

14. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the author's case?

◯ **A.** In several districts, the lawyers who assist undertrials have asked that the amount of their fees under legal aid schemes be increased

◯ **B.** Most undertrials who are released on a personal bond under the provision subsequently attend the trial hearings that are fixed for them

◯ **C.** In districts that adopted monthly jail lists, bail applications from eligible prisoners fell while releases under the provision rose

◯ **D.** The rate of conviction in cases involving prisoners who qualify under the provision is lower than the average for all criminal trials

15. Which of the following arguments is most similar in its pattern of reasoning to the argument above?

◯ **A.** Public libraries lose books because borrowers forget the return dates, so every library should replace its late fines with a system of free renewals, since fines have never encouraged anyone to return a book

◯ **B.** Few citizens read the annual reports of public companies because they are long, so company law should require each report to be written in plain language, since long documents are difficult for the average reader

◯ **C.** A school's attendance falls on rainy days because roads flood, so the school should shift its terms to the dry season, since children who miss lessons in one season always catch up quickly in another

◯ **D.** Refunds owed to small taxpayers go unclaimed because claiming needs a form, so the tax office should compute and credit them from its own returns, since a refund that must be requested will be claimed less than is owed

CRITICAL REASONING — ENVIRONMENT · THE HECTARE AND THE FOREST (Q16–Q20)

When land inside a forest is diverted for a mine, a road or a dam, Indian law does not leave the loss unaccounted. Under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the project must, as a condition of clearance, provide non-forest land of equal area, or degraded forest land of twice the area, for compensatory afforestation, and must pay the net present value of the forest that is lost. Since the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016, the money has been pooled in national and state funds, and its use is reported as a steady growth in plantations across the country. The principle behind this design is that a hectare lost can be balanced by a hectare planted.

That principle deserves more scepticism than it receives. A forest is not a count of trees on a stretch of ground. A natural forest carries a seed bank in its soil, a layered canopy, fungi and insects that took centuries to settle, and the movement routes of animals that depend on continuity of cover. A plantation raised on a bare patch hundreds of kilometres away, often of a few fast-growing species, may in time yield timber and stored carbon, but it does not restore the streams that the original forest fed or the species that sheltered in it. To record the two as equal because they share an area is to measure with the only ruler that the accounting provides.

Defenders answer that the alternative is worse: without a statutory obligation, projects would proceed with no replacement at all. This is true but does not answer the objection. The charge is not that compensation should be abolished; it is that the unit in which it is reckoned conceals the loss it is supposed to measure. If success is reported in hectares, the system will produce hectares, and developers will be pushed toward the cheapest land that satisfies the count, which is usually the land of least ecological value. A fairer test would value the diverted forest by what it does, such as the water it regulates, the carbon it holds and the species it supports, and would require the compensation to be located in the same landscape. Until the books record the function, the country will go on reporting a forest cover that looks stable on paper while the forests that matter are quietly traded away.

16. Which of the following best states the main conclusion of the argument?

◯ **A.** Compensatory afforestation should be abolished because projects would find it cheaper to divert forest land if they were no longer required to pay for any replacement

◯ **B.** Because compensatory afforestation is reckoned by area, it hides the ecological loss, so compensation should be valued by function and located in the same landscape

◯ **C.** The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 has failed because it has not produced any growth in the plantations that were meant to replace diverted forests

◯ **D.** Natural forests should never be diverted for mines, roads or dams, because no plantation in any location can replace what a mature forest provides to the land

17. The author's argument assumes which of the following?

◯ **A.** The land that is cheapest for developers to acquire is generally land of low ecological value

◯ **B.** The net present value of a diverted forest is always larger than the cost of raising a plantation of equal area elsewhere

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◯ **C.** Every plantation raised under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act is made up of a single species of fast-growing trees
◯ **D.** A valuation of forest function can be fixed only by a statute passed by Parliament and cannot be set by the executive

18. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the author's claim that area-based accounting conceals ecological loss?

◯ **A.** Several states have been slow to spend the money collected in their funds, so that many plantations are raised years after the forests are cleared
◯ **B.** The net present value paid for a diverted forest is calculated by an expert committee on the basis of the timber and carbon value of the stand
◯ **C.** Forest cover figures in the national survey include orchards, bamboo groves and urban parks along with natural forests of the traditional type
◯ **D.** Compensatory plantations are usually raised in the diverted forest's river basin, use mixed native species, and match natural regeneration in survival

19. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the author's argument that hectares conceal loss?

◯ **A.** A study of the funds found that the average cost of raising a hectare of plantation has risen faster than the general level of prices across the decade
◯ **B.** A survey of project developers found that most of them regard the requirement to provide compensatory land as a reasonable condition of clearance
◯ **C.** A study of cleared forests and their plantations found that the plantations held under a tenth of the native species of the forests they replaced
◯ **D.** A study of the national forest survey found that the total area under recorded forest has not fallen at all over the last ten years

20. Which of the following identifies the most serious weakness in the author's reasoning?

◯ **A.** It attacks the officials who manage the funds instead of examining the principle on which compensatory afforestation is based
◯ **B.** It proposes valuing forest by function without showing that function can be measured as reliably and verifiably as area
◯ **C.** It assumes that plantations have no ecological value at all merely because they lack some features of a natural forest
◯ **D.** It relies on the figures for forest cover being accurate while also arguing that those same figures are misleading

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

32 quick questions · not negatively marked

1. Plural of 'criterion'? _____
2. Meaning of 'res ipsa loquitur'? _____
3. Fallacy: B followed A, so A caused B? _____
4. Synonym of 'ephemeral'? _____
5. Meaning of 'mens rea'? _____
6. Article guaranteeing equality before the law? _____
7. Article 21 protects what? _____
8. Which 2017 judgment declared privacy a fundamental right? _____
9. Antonym of 'candid'? _____
10. Meaning of 'obiter dictum'? _____
11. In CR, the unstated premise the conclusion needs is called? _____
12. Who introduced the Permanent Settlement, and when? _____
13. Ryotwari settlement is associated with which official in Madras? _____
14. Which article gives the right to constitutional remedies? _____
15. Meaning of 'habeas corpus'? _____
16. Meaning of 'ubiquitous'? _____
17. Which is the verb meaning 'to influence': affect or effect? _____
18. Year of the Forest (Conservation) Act? _____
19. Meaning of 'stare decisis'? _____
20. Meaning of 'sardonic'? _____
21. Meaning of 'sine die'? _____
22. A weaken question asks for the option that does what? _____
23. What did the 'sunset law' of 1793 provide? _____
24. Meaning of 'prima facie'? _____
25. Which 2016 Act governs the compensatory afforestation fund? _____
26. Meaning of 'pragmatic'? _____
27. Meaning of the idiom 'burn the midnight oil'? _____
28. Which article abolishes untouchability? _____
29. Hussainara Khatoon (1979) stressed which right under Article 21? _____
30. Writ of 'mandamus' means and does what? _____
31. Meaning of 'pro bono'? _____
32. Fallacy: refuting a distorted version of the opponent's claim? _____

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