

**NLAT 2020 – UG
BATCH 3 QUESTION PAPER**

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PASSAGE 9:

Each set of questions in this section is based on a single passage. Please answer each question relying on what is stated or implied in the corresponding passage. If more than one option provides a partial answer to the question, choose the option that most accurately and comprehensively answers the question.

The recent announcement of paid period leave for female employees by an Indian unicorn has once again thrust the issue of mandatory menstrual leave into the spotlight. Many activists feel that menstrual leave should be a paid leave granted by law, like maternity leave.

The support for period leave rests on a sound rights-based argument — that workplaces need to accommodate for biological differences between co-workers. Period leave allows women to rightfully rest during their menstrual cycle. It is well-documented that women experience a wide range of health complications during their monthly cycle — cramps, back and muscle pains, bloating, headaches, nausea, among others. These symptoms can assume greater severity for women suffering from chronic conditions like polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and endometriosis.

While the experience of a period is different for different women, and certainly differs month-to-month for the same woman, period leave is thought to be a means to legitimise the physical toll of a painful monthly cycle, to be taken if required, a means to create equity at the workplace.

However, to achieve the stated objective, we cannot ignore the economics of period leave. We need to be clear where the funding for menstrual leaves comes from. If menstrual leave is structured like maternity leave, it threatens to increase the cost of hiring women. This has implications in the long-run.

Teamlease Services found that 1.1-1.8 million women lost their jobs in 2018-19 across 10 major sectors owing to the *Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017* which doubled paid maternity leave from three to six months. Similarly, there are other costs associated with hiring women that lead to unsaid but rampant discrimination.

It is well-known that many employers in India are hesitant to hire women for jobs that require frequent travel as they need to make special arrangements for their safety. Essentially, society's failure to keep women reasonably safe leads to a public cost internalised by employers as a private cost.

Further, we need to be cognisant of who menstrual leave would benefit and who it could potentially keep out of the workforce. About 55% of urban working women were in regular, salaried employment in 2018-19. Of these, 71% had no written job contract, 51% were not eligible for paid leave, and 53% were not eligible for any social security benefit. Period leave will not touch the lives of millions of casual women workers in the informal economy in both urban and rural areas. By increasing the costs of hiring women, we, in fact, risk keeping them out of the workforce.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from "Designing a new framework for paid period leaves", by Aparajita Bharti and Mitali Nikore, *Hindustan Times*, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/designing-a-new-framework-for-paid-period-leaves-analysis/story-fHAzp65zaoNfxw7NxALRxN.html>]

1. When the authors speak of an 'Indian unicorn', they are referring to:

- (a) An Indian business that is very progressive in its policies.
- (b) Something that is very difficult to find in India.
- (c) A mythical creature which looks like a horse with a single horn on its head.
- (d) An Indian company that is worth more than a billion dollars in value.

(Answer: (d))

2. Assume that the actual number of women who lost their jobs in 2018-19 due to the introduction of the *Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017* (the "Act") was the mean between the two ends of the range estimated by Teamlease Services. Assume further that the job loss in each of the 10 sectors, which you can refer to separately as sector 1, sector 2, sector 3 and so on for the purposes of this question, was such that in each of the ten sectors, twice the number of jobs were lost than in the previous sector (i.e., if 1 job was lost in sector 1, 2 jobs were lost in sector 2, 4 jobs were lost in sector 3, 8 jobs were lost in sector 4 and so on). If this is the case, approximately how many women lost their job in sector 7 due to the introduction of the Act?

- (a) More than 100000
- (b) More than 90000 but less than 100000
- (c) Less than 90000 but more than 50000
- (d) Less than 50000

(Answer: (b))

3. The government introduces a new law, the *Period Leave Act, 2020* that directs employers to provide for a certain number of days each month as paid period leave for women of menstruating age. The law also says that women workers can take these leave days as they choose and that they should not be penalised in any way for doing so. Sheila, a fifth-year law student, often suffers very painful periods and decides to stay away from class for the number of days specified under the law. Her university informs her at the end of the year that she has failed that year, since her attendance is below the specified minimum. Sheila claims the university has violated the *Period Leave Act, 2020*. Is she right?
- (a) No, since the law applies to women workers and not to students.
 - (b) No, since Sheila was the only female student who decided to take leave on the days of her period.
 - (c) Yes, since the university is also an employer, and is bound to follow the law.
 - (d) Both (a) and (b).

(Answer: (a))

4. In a case between activists supporting women's rights and the managing organisation of one of India's largest temples, the Supreme Court upheld the right of menstruating women to enter the temple premises. A day before the *Period Leave Act, 2020* comes into force, the temple's managing committee decides to fire its women employees, who are engaged in accounting activities, in an office located some distance away from the temple premises, rather than comply with the new law. Has the temple's managing committee violated the *Period Leave Act, 2020*?
- (a) Yes – they have indirectly violated the *Period Leave Act, 2020* by firing all their women employees.
 - (b) Yes – they are trying to do indirectly what they cannot do directly, and so they should be punished.
 - (c) Yes – the office was located outside the temple premises, so there should have been no problem for the temple's managing committee to follow the rules under the new law.
 - (d) No – the *Period Leave Act, 2020* only provides for paid period leave for women of menstruating age; it does not state anything about their hiring or firing.

(Answer: (d))

5. Who among the following co-founded an organisation that also launched a comic book guide to menstruation for girls of age 9-14 years, for which the crowd funding campaign was launched in May 2013?
- (a) Deepinder Goyal
 - (b) Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

- (c) Aditi Gupta
- (d) Upasana Taku

(Answer: (c))

6. Which among the following most accurately describes the meaning of the phrase 'a means to create equity at the workplace' as used in the passage above?

- (a) A way of creating fairness and impartiality at workplaces.
- (b) A way of increasing the value of the shares of a company.
- (c) A way of ensuring everyone shows up on time for work.
- (d) A way of increasing inequality at workplaces.

(Answer: (a))

7. Which of the following films, based on the work of Arunachalam Muruganantham, won an Academy Award in 2018?

- (a) *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*
- (b) *Period. End of Sentence.*
- (c) *Pad Man*
- (d) *Phullu*

(Answer: (b))

8. Which among the following most accurately describes the main point of the authors in the passage above?

- (a) Paid period leave is a very good idea and should be introduced in all workplaces right away.
- (b) Measures such as the Act and paid period leave, while progressive in nature, may actually result in more women being kept out of the workplace.
- (c) Economic factors should not be considered when implementing rules that bring about greater equality at the workplace.
- (d) Workplaces should not hire women, since it is more expensive to do so than to hire men.

(Answer: (b))

9. If there were 31 million women workers in urban areas and 127.6 million women workers in rural areas in 2018-19, what number of urban women workers, as a percentage of the total number of women workers, had no written contract? (Assume that the total number of women workers = women workers in urban areas + women workers in rural areas.)

- (a) More than 5.00% but less than 10.00%
- (b) More than 17.25% but less than 18.50%
- (c) More than 15.50% but less than 16.50%
- (d) More than 2.00% but less than 5.00%

(Answer: (a))

10. The authors caution that the introduction of paid period leave may result in keeping more women out of the workplace, since it increases the costs of hiring women. At the same time, "period leave is thought to be a means to legitimise the physical toll of a painful monthly cycle, to be taken if required". Women should also have the right to decide how much about their menstrual health they wish to disclose to their employers. Which of the following would be a way of balancing all these?

- (a) Women of menstruating age should not be allowed to join the workplace.
- (b) Offices should have separate rooms at the workplace, prominently marked, where menstruating women can rest.
- (c) The current system should not change, and workplaces need not make any accommodations for women who are on their periods.
- (d) Instead of providing women paid period leave, workplaces should allow a fixed number of 'work from home' days for both men and women that could be taken without providing a reason, and women could use these days to work from home if they so wish while they are on their period.

(Answer: (d))

PASSAGE 10

Each set of questions in this section is based on a single passage. Please answer each question relying on what is stated or implied in the corresponding passage. If more than one option provides a partial answer to the question, choose the option that most accurately and comprehensively answers the question.

Data from India's statistics ministry has put a figure on the gloom that has pervaded our economy since the COVID pandemic struck. By its estimate, gross domestic product ("GDP") in the three months ended 30 June, or the first quarter of 2020-21, shrank 23.9% from the quarterly figure a year earlier. This marks the country's first economic contraction since 1979. After economic activity was largely brought to a standstill by an all-India lockdown imposed in late March, a drastic fall in our output of goods and services was a given. What we did not know was the extent of it. As it turns out, the figure reported is slightly worse than the 20% decline that most economists had predicted. Worryingly, however, this might be an underestimation. Since no direct data on the performance of the informal sector is readily available, our GDP calculations use formal sector data as a proxy for the former. Under usual circumstances, that may be fine. But in this instance, informal units were found by some independent surveys to have been hit harder by the crisis. Once better data comes in, the first quarter's GDP will definitely need to be revised downwards.

It is clear that the entire economy is in pain. Value addition in manufacturing fell 39% over the previous quarter. The little support the economy got was from farm production, which grew 3.4% over the previous quarter. It would be foolhardy to bet on a recovery anytime soon: though our nationwide lockdown has been largely lifted, commerce remains constrained. Localised restrictions have prevented supply lines from being fully restored, even as a jumble of curbs in various places made all-India operations hard to run. It is true that factory shutters have been lifted, construction sites no longer look desolate, and offices are reopening. But pre-COVID levels of resource availability—both human and material—will take time for businesses to attain. The other problem is a second-order impact of the COVID crisis: the commercial crunch has translated into job losses, reduced salaries and income anxieties of a kind unfelt in recent times. Demand has slumped, worsening business conditions further, and causing even more uncertainty.

The last quarter's wipe-out could be followed by more bleak quarters. Indian policymakers must frame their response accordingly. Also bear in mind that India's economy was on a downward trend well before the pandemic struck. A recovery plan, therefore, must also aim to fix pre-COVID drags on growth. Incremental change will not do. We need a broad set of structural reforms that address long-term challenges. For an instant uptick, however, the country needs the demand boost of a sizeable fiscal stimulus. Money needs to be pushed around. The Centre could begin by ensuring that people at large have more of it to spend. True, this would be a costly affair. But it has to be weighed against the cost of letting things slide further.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from "Last quarter's washout must spur policy action", *Livemint*, <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/columns/last-quarter-s-washout-must-spur-policy-action-11598886533678.html>]

1. Which among the following most accurately and comprehensively explains why the author says that “[o]nce better data comes in, the first quarter’s GDP will definitely need to be revised downwards”?
- (a) Formal sector data has been used as a proxy for the informal sector.
 - (b) The government is trying to buy time by not revealing all available data.
 - (c) Formal sector data has been used as a proxy for the informal sector, and some independent surveys have found that the informal sector has been worse hit by the crisis.
 - (d) The informal sector has performed better than the formal sector in the crisis.

(Answer: (c))

2. As a move to help the economy recover, the government passes a set of guidelines, the *Open Up Guidelines, July 2020* (the “**July Guidelines**”) which provide that businesses may resume operations in their offices, so long as an office has only a third or less of the total number of people that can be accommodated in it at any time. Veena runs an advertising agency in Chandigarh, and her business has 90 employees, including herself. She re-opens her office after seeing the July Guidelines. The office can accommodate up to 120 people, and Veena implements a shift rotation system, such that 39 of her employees and herself are in the office on any given day. A government inspector visits her office one day, and tells her that she has violated the July Guidelines, and must pay a fine. Has Veena violated the July Guidelines?
- (a) Yes, since her office had more than 30% of the total number of employees present in it.
 - (b) No, since it was important for Veena to re-open her office and run her business, given the dire state of the economy.
 - (c) Yes, since it would have been better to keep the office shut, so as to avoid any risk of infection amongst her employees.
 - (d) No, since her office only had a third of the number of people that it could accommodate at any point of time, which is in accordance with the July Guidelines.

(Answer: (d))

3. Assume that the reduction in GDP the Indian economy experienced in the first quarter of 2020-21 was (i) a reduction of 15% over the previous quarter (“**Previous Quarter**”) and (ii) the Previous Quarter and the quarter that preceded it each saw a 10 % reduction in GDP based on the quarters that preceded them. If India's GDP is assumed to have a value of 100 at the end of the first quarter of 2020-21, what was India's GDP at the end of the second quarter of 2019-2020?

- (a) Between 138 and 147

- (b) Between 64 and 73
- (c) Between 152 and 168
- (d) Between 13 and 21

(Answer: (a))

4. Which among the following is the author most likely to agree with?

- (a) The last quarter was an aberration, and the coming quarters will be dramatically better.
- (b) It is likely that the economy will continue to shrink if a fiscal stimulus is not provided by the government.
- (c) Fiscal stimuli are extremely expensive and the government should not consider providing them at all.
- (d) Demand will see an instant uptick in the coming quarters and nothing need be done to achieve this.

(Answer: (b))

5. Which among the following are methods used to calculate GDP by the Central Statistics Office in India?

- (a) GDP at factor cost.
- (b) Expenditure-based method.
- (c) Both, (a) and (b).
- (d) Neither (a) nor (b).

(Answer: (c))

6. Which among the following best explains why the author says demand has slumped, worsening business conditions?

- (a) People are anxious about their income, some have lost jobs and wages have been lowered.
- (b) People have become more spiritual and less materialistic as a result of the crisis.
- (c) People have already bought everything they wanted in the first few weeks of the crisis.
- (d) People are importing their requirements rather than buying from local manufacturers.

(Answer: (a))

7. The *Open Up Guidelines, July 2020* (the “**July Guidelines**”) are modified to provide that businesses may resume operations in their offices, so long as the total number of employees in the office at any time is a third or less of the total number of people that can be

accommodated in the office at any time. The modifications also include a change to the effect that visitors could be permitted into the office, so long as the appropriate social distancing norms are followed. One day, Raveena had 35 employees in her office, which could accommodate a maximum of 120 people. Raveena was also present in the office, since she had an important meeting that day with a client. When the client's team, which included seven people, was at her office for the meeting, a government inspector arrived and told Raveena that she had violated the July Guidelines. Has Raveena violated the July Guidelines?

- (a) No, since the number of employees in the office was less than a third of its total capacity.
- (b) No, since it was important for Raveena's business to resume smooth operations, which includes meetings with clients.
- (c) Yes, since the office had more people than the permitted limit under the July Guidelines.
- (d) Yes, since Raveena should have moved to a bigger office.

(Answer: (a))

8. Which among the following, if true, would most weaken the author's arguments in the passage above?

- (a) Formal sector data are identical to informal sector data and the independent surveys of informal units are completely flawed.
- (b) Formal sector data are identical to informal sector data.
- (c) We do not have accurate information about the informal sector.
- (d) The informal sector usually fares much worse than the formal sector.

(Answer: (a))

9. Assuming the base value of manufacturing and farm production is 100 for the last quarter of 2019-20 and if the fall in value addition in manufacturing and the growth in farm production continues at the same rates as those set out in the passage for another two quarters, then what would be the difference between the value of manufacturing and farm production at the end of the third quarter of 2020-2021?

- (a) Between 91 and 95
- (b) Between 76 and 80
- (c) Between 81 and 85
- (d) Between 85 and 90

(Answer: (d))

10. Which among the following is a difference between the PM Cares Fund and the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (the "PMNRF")?

- (a) Companies donating to the PM Cares Fund may earmark such contributions towards Corporate Social Responsibility, which is not the case for the PMNRF.
- (b) The Prime Minister heads the PM Cares Fund but not the PMNRF.
- (c) Both, (a) and (b).
- (d) Neither (a) nor (b).

(Answer: (a))

PASSAGE 11

Each set of questions in this section is based on a single passage. Please answer each question relying on what is stated or implied in the corresponding passage. If more than one option provides a partial answer to the question, choose the option that most accurately and comprehensively answers the question.

The share market is probably the only component of the economy that has recovered fully from the Covid induced slowdown. To the consternation of Central Banks the world over, the funds released by monetary easing have fuelled a boom in the stock market; stock prices are on the up and up, the US Dow Jones and S&P 500 are nearing all-time highs and European, Chinese and Japanese stock markets are behaving similarly. Our own Nifty is following suit. Almost all economies are staring at recession, but share prices, which should reflect the true value of corporates, are at record high levels.

The BSE Sensex, which had slumped to 25,981 on 23 March 2020 has risen consistently thereafter, and is now touching 39,000 - within striking distance of the all-time high of 42,273. The gain in stock prices during the last five months has been 50% - at a time when the Indian economy has contracted significantly, with our GDP falling by 23.9 per cent in the first quarter.

This is probably for the first time in our history that financial satraps feel concerned about a rising share market. Generally, Finance Ministers and Reserve Bank Governors do their best to prevent the share market from falling. To recapitulate, the tax hikes proposed by Budget 2019, which had led to a continued fall in the Sensex, were reversed within a month.

It is not difficult to see that easy availability of credit and paucity of productive avenues of investment are the cause of rising share prices. After drastically reducing the lending rate, which increased liquidity in the market (and also reduced interest rates on bank deposits), the RBI can only hope for the market to self-correct. The RBI Governor expressed his exasperation at the over-heated stock market, saying: "It (the share market) will certainly witness correction in the future. But when the correction will take place, it is hard to predict."

Apart from market risks, brokerages are under a cloud after a record number of defaults involving clients' funds in the last three years, that has prompted the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI") to frame new rules to restrict brokers' access to clients' funds and shares. However, the Investor Protection Funds at both NSE (Rs.594.12 crore) and BSE (Rs.727.59 crore) are highly inadequate given the fact that a single default (of Karvy) amounted to Rs.678 crores. Also, in case of broker defaults, NSE compensates investors to a maximum of Rs.25 lakh, while the BSE pays only up to Rs 15 lakh.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from "The Errant Market", by Devendra Saksensa, *The Statesman*, available at: <https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/the-errant-market-2-1502922581.html>]

1. Which among the following most accurately explains the meaning of the phrase “brokerages are under a cloud” as used in the passage?

- (a) Many brokerages suspect their clients and do not like to accept funds from them.
- (b) Many people think brokerages earn a lot of money and that they are completely honest in their practices.
- (c) Many brokerages indulge in defaults involving their clients’ funds during the rainy season.
- (d) Many people suspect brokerages are dishonest because there have been defaults by brokerages involving their clients’ money in the recent past.

(Answer: (d))

2. The Securities and Exchange Board of India banned Karvy Stock Broking from certain activities in November 2019 for:

- (a) Allegedly committing foreign trade violations involving offshore banks in tax havens.
- (b) Allegedly misappropriating clients’ funds and diverting them to Karvy Realty.
- (c) Allegedly setting up an internet access business in an unauthorised fashion.
- (d) Allegedly misappropriating clients’ funds and diverting them to Karvy Banking Services.

(Answer: (b))

3. Which of the following conclusions can be validly drawn from the information and arguments set out in the passage above?

- (a) The stock market does not accurately reflect the overall state of the economy.
- (b) The stock market is an accurate reflection of the overall state of the economy.
- (c) Finance Ministers and Reserve Bank Governors never try to prevent falls in the stock market.
- (d) It is unwise to invest in the stock market at this point in time.

(Answer: (a))

4. Assume the 50% gain in stock prices described in the passage above is directly co-related to the 23.9% fall in GDP described in the passage above and that this gain in stock prices resulted in an increase of 3000 points in the BSE Sensex. By how many points would the BSE Sensex have increased if there were a fall of 30% in GDP, assuming that the direct co-relation between gain in stock prices and fall in GDP is true?

- (a) 3750
- (b) 3765
- (c) 3702

(d) 3789

(Answer: (b))

5. Assume SEBI's rules provide that the NSE must "compensate any investor from the Investor Protection Fund if that investor can show that they suffered a financial loss due to cheating on the part of their broker." Suman, an investor, approaches the NSE and says that her broker, Barvy, gave her very poor advice and that she lost money because of Barvy's advice. She says the Barvy people are 'not smart enough' and wants the NSE to compensate her from the Investor Protection Fund. Does the NSE have to compensate Suman from the Investor Protection Fund?

- (a) Yes, since Suman had reposed her faith as an investor with Barvy.
- (b) No, since Suman should have approached the BSE and not the NSE.
- (c) Yes, since it was Barvy's responsibility to hire only very smart people to advise investors.
- (d) No, since there is nothing to show that Barvy cheated Suman.

(Answer: (d))

6. Which of the following books, written by a former governor of the Reserve Bank of India, focuses on efforts at managing non-performing assets?

- (a) *Saving Capitalism from the Capitalists*
- (b) *Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver*
- (c) *The Indian Economy: Problems and Prospects*
- (d) None of the above

(Answer: (b))

7. Assume the Investor Protection Funds at both NSE and BSE had to be deployed to compensate investors due to Karvy's default. If each investor had to be compensated to the maximum amount that NSE and BSE compensates investors, then what would be the difference in the number of investors that BSE and NSE would each be able to compensate due to Karvy's default?

- (a) Between 1150 and 2000
- (b) Between 2450 and 2500
- (c) More than 2500
- (d) Between 2050 and 2150

(Answer: (b))

8. Based on the information in the passage above, which of the following most accurately explains why the tax hikes proposed by Budget 2019 were reversed within a month?
- (a) As a result of the tax hikes, the Sensex witnessed a persistent fall and the reversal was to counter this trend.
 - (b) Because common people in the country were badly affected by the tax hikes and there were massive protests across the country.
 - (c) Both, (a) and (b).
 - (d) Neither (a) nor (b).

(Answer: (a))

9. Which among the following, if true, would most weaken the author's arguments in the passage above?
- (a) The rise in share prices is because of the fact that it is now much easier to obtain loans.
 - (b) The rise in share prices has been caused by the increase in the number of small investors and not by the paucity of productive avenues of investment.
 - (c) The rise in share prices has been caused by the increase in the number of small investors and not by the easy availability of credit or paucity of productive avenues of investment.
 - (d) The rise in share prices has been caused by the increase in the number of small investors and not by the easy availability of credit.

(Answer: (c))

10. A new law called the "Market Oversight Act" is passed by Parliament, which provides that the Finance Minister must reverse any tax hikes announced in the past six months if there is a change of more than 5000 points in the BSE Sensex on any two consecutive days, unless the country is undergoing a financial emergency. The Finance Minister announces a tax hike on April 12, 2018. Later, the BSE Sensex rises by 6000 points on August 11, 2018 and by 7000 points on August 12, 2018. Does the Finance Minister have to reverse the tax hike as per the Market Oversight Act?
- (a) No, since the country is undergoing a financial emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the taxes are necessary in the present scenario.
 - (b) No, since the rise in the BSE Sensex is not a reason to reverse the tax hike; the rule applies only to a fall in the BSE Sensex.
 - (c) Yes, since there was a change of more than 5000 points in the BSE Sensex on two consecutive days within six months of the tax hike.
 - (d) Yes, since the tax hike is creating extraordinary changes in the BSE Sensex.

(Answer: (c))

PASSAGE 12

Each set of questions in this section is based on a single passage. Please answer each question relying on what is stated or implied in the corresponding passage. If more than one option provides a partial answer to the question, choose the option that most accurately and comprehensively answers the question.

The Himalaya are India's most important natural asset. Without them, the country would not survive. These grand mountains are a barrier to invaders, the source of our greatest rivers, a rich reservoir of biodiversity, and home to our holiest shrines. Ecologically, economically, culturally, and strategically, the Himalaya are vital to the future of India as a nation.

The politicians who now rule us claim to revere the Himalaya, yet, under their watch, these mountains are witnessing a savage attack on their integrity. This attack takes the form of an ill-conceived project known as the Char Dham Pariyojana. Costing 12,000 crores, this scheme aims to widen some 880 kilometres of roads, intended to provide quicker access to the four holy shrines of Jamnotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath. The scheme has been executed with utter recklessness, an absolute lack of concern for environmental and human safety. A public outcry compelled the Supreme Court to appoint a committee of experts (the “**Committee**”), which recently submitted an 800-page report on the devastation already caused by the project.

This report makes for chilling reading, and I shall come to it presently.

Normally, for a project of the scale and scope of the Char Dham Pariyojana, a detailed and prior Environmental Impact Assessment (“**EIA**”) is mandatory. Here, the report explains how this responsibility was evaded by a diabolical sleight of hand: since a detailed EIA is required for a road project of more than 100 km in length, this 880 km road-widening project was broken up into many small sections on paper, such that no EIA of any section would have to be done.

On one stretch of the Char Dham Pariyojana, the Committee found that as many as 102 of 174 freshly-cut slopes were prone to landslides. Everywhere, slope failures were ubiquitous.

Notably, pilgrim traffic to the Char Dham is concentrated in a few months, from May to September. Besides, these are not commercial travellers for whom every minute is precious. Why should a spiritual person grudge taking a few hours or few days longer to reach a sacred shrine? In the old days, pilgrims walked. Road-building in the Himalaya should also take account of their ecological uniqueness and vulnerability. To so mindlessly replicate a model appropriate to inter-city traffic in the plains is profoundly ill-judged, and shall prove very costly indeed.

The situation can still be retrieved, if the proposed 12-metre-width of the widened roads is replaced by a more sensible 5.5 metre limit, and the other recommendations of this Committee are adopted. The Committee has many sensible suggestions for new and less destructive alignments, for revegetation of degraded areas with indigenous species, for special measures to be adopted for road stretches in upper reaches which experience heavy snowfall, etc. These meticulously detailed

recommendations draw upon geological, ecological, as well as engineering expertise. They are offered by scientific experts who have each spent decades living and working in the Himalaya. One desperately hopes they are heeded, and implemented.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from "The Wilful Destruction Of The Himalaya Must Stop" by Ramachandra Guha, NDTV.com, <https://www.ndtv.com/opinion/killing-the-himalaya-one-cut-at-a-time-by-ramachandra-guha-2287551>]

1. Which of the following most accurately explains what the author means when he says “chilling reading” in the context of the passage?
 - (a) That the order of the Supreme Court appointing the Committee is frightening to read.
 - (b) That one should read the report of the Committee appointed by the Supreme Court to relax.
 - (c) That the report of the Committee appointed by the Supreme Court is frightening to read.
 - (d) That one should not read the report of the Committee appointed by the Supreme Court since it has no useful recommendations.

(Answer: (c))

2. The government passes a set of rules, called the “EIA Rules”, which provide that an EIA is compulsory for all construction projects can commence on river banks. The EIA Rules also provide that if the construction is, necessary for defence purposes in border areas, then the EIA need not be conducted. “Border areas” are defined under the EIA Rules to mean any place within a 100 km distance of India’s international border. The senior most General of the Indian Army decides to build a post-retirement home on the banks of a river. Does the General need to conduct an EIA under the EIA Rules?
 - (a) Yes, since the construction of the General’s post-retirement home is not a defence purpose.
 - (b) No, if the place that the General wants to build their holiday home is in a border area.
 - (c) No, if the place that the General wants to build their holiday home is not in a border area.
 - (d) Yes, since doing so would set a good example for the soldiers in the Indian Army.

(Answer: (a))

3. Assume the cost of the Char Dham Pariyojana for widening the length of roads set out in the passage is in relation to widening existing roads of 3-metre-width to 12-metre-width. In a similar project, what percentage of the total cost was paid to an Expert Committee out of the total cost of the project, if the Expert Committee had 500 experts who were each paid Rs. 5,00,000 per month to widen 1.5 times the length of the existing roads from 5-metre width to 14-metre-width in 9 months?

(a) More than 1.5% but less than 2%

- (b) Between 1% and 1.5%
- (c) More than 2%
- (d) Less than 1%

(Answer: (a))

4. Based on the information and arguments set out in the passage above, which among the following is the author most likely to agree with?

- (a) EIAs are of no help in ensuring the preservation of our natural assets.
- (b) The Supreme Court should not have appointed the Committee, since there was no need for it.
- (c) The recommendations of the Committee would not be able to help mitigate the destruction of the Himalayas in any way.
- (d) The recommendations of the Committee should be considered and put into action, since not doing so would mean the continued destruction of a vital ecological resource of the country.

(Answer: (d))

5. The author of the passage above has written a famous book about an Indian environmental movement, the leader of which was one of the persons listed below. Which one was it?

- (a) Jayaprakash Narayan
- (b) Sunderlal Bahuguna
- (c) Arundhati Roy
- (d) Vinobha Bhave

(Answer: (b))

6. The government passes a new law, which says that regardless of what any other law may say, an EIA must be conducted for any construction project in the Himalayas, unless that construction project is intended for the benefit and protection of the Himalayan environment. Under this new law, would an EIA be necessary for the Char Dham Pariyojana?

- (a) No, since the project is necessary for a defence purpose in a border area.
- (b) Yes, since it would be more auspicious for a project related to four holy shrines to do so.
- (c) Yes, since the Char Dham Pariyojana is intended for the the benefit and protection of the Himalayan environment.
- (d) Yes, since the Char Dham Pariyojana is aimed at quicker access to four holy shrines, and is not intended for the benefit and protection of the Himalayan environment.

(Answer: (d))

7. Which among the following statements about the *Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2020* is true?

- (a) They provide that projects in violation of some environmental laws can now apply for post-facto clearance.
- (b) They exempt a large number of projects from the requirement for a public consultation.
- (c) Neither (a) nor (b).
- (d) Both, (a) and (b).

(Answer: (d))

8. Assume that the freshly-cut slopes described in the passage were cut during the rainy season, and that the ratio of slopes cut during the rainy season that are prone to landslides to the total number of slopes cut in the rainy season is constant. How many slopes freshly-cut in the summer would be prone to landslides if 200 slopes were cut in the summer, and if the ratio of slopes cut during the summer that are prone to landslides to the total number of slopes cut in summer is 20% of the ratio of slopes cut during the rainy season that are prone to landslides to the total number of slopes cut in the rainy season.

- (a) 24
- (b) 23
- (c) 25
- (d) Between (a) and (b)

(Answer: (d))

9. Which among the following most completely sets out the main ideas in the passage above?

- (a) The Himalayas are an immensely valuable natural asset and the Char Dham Pariyojana poses a great threat to their integrity.
- (b) The Himalayas are an immensely valuable natural asset; the Char Dham Pariyojana poses a great threat to their integrity, but it may be possible to avoid such a threat if the recommendations of the Committee are implemented.
- (c) The Himalayas are not an immensely valuable natural asset and the Char Dham Pariyojana does not pose a great threat to their integrity.
- (d) The Himalayas are an immensely valuable natural asset, and the recommendations of the Committee should be implemented.

(Answer: (b))

10. Which among the following, if true, would most weaken the author's arguments in the passage above?

- (a) A detailed EIA is only required for road projects that aim to widen roads of more than 100 km in length.
- (b) A detailed EIA is only required for road projects that aim to build new roads of more than 100 km in length.
- (c) A detailed EIA is required for any road projects in the Himalayas.
- (d) A detailed EIA is only required for road projects that aim to widen roads of more than 10 km in length.

(Answer: (b))
