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# Daily Quiz, August 18, 2026

18 August 2026



CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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## DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

# Daily Quiz, August 18, 2026

18 August 2026 · 12 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

### Question 1

of 12

 [Source →](#)

The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting, held at Bharat Mandapam on August 18, 2026, adopted which outcome document?

- ☒ **A** The New Delhi Statement ✓
- ☐ **B** The Bharat Mandapam Declaration
- ☐ **C** The BRICS Sustainability Charter
- ☐ **D** The Resilience Accord

### ANSWER & ANALYSIS

#### ✓ EXPLANATION

**FACT:** The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting, chaired by Union Minister Bhupender Yadav at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on August 18, 2026, adopted the "New Delhi Statement" along with an outcome document, following the Senior Officers' Meeting held the previous day. **ANALYSIS:** Naming the outcome document after the host city follows a common diplomatic convention in multilateral summitry, and the statement's substance, four measurable national-action priorities, reflects India's push within BRICS toward implementable rather than purely declaratory environmental commitments.

#### CONCEPT NOTE

India's 2026 BRICS Chairship theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability," frames the year's agenda across all BRICS working groups, environment being one track among several including trade, finance and health that culminate in a leaders' summit. The four priorities named in the New Delhi Statement are: promoting sustainable lifestyles; afforestation, forest-fire management and disaster resilience (as one combined priority); circular economy; and adaptation, marking a shift from financing-dependent global climate pledges toward nationally actionable commitments each member state can pursue independently.

This approach is often framed as distinctively Global South-oriented, contrasting with the emissions-target and climate-finance framing common in UNFCCC-linked processes.

**Q1**  **CONCEPT KIT**

|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <b>CROSS-PAPER</b>    | GS2 (international relations, multilateral groupings); GS3 (environment, sustainable development).                                         |
|  <b>MAINS KEYWORDS</b> | New Delhi Statement, BRICS Environment Working Group, Bharat Mandapam.                                                                     |
|  <b>COMMON MISTAKE</b> | confusing the Ministers' Meeting (formal adoption) with the preceding Senior Officers' Meeting (technical preparation) held a day earlier. |
|  <b>EXAM TIP</b>       | anchor "New Delhi Statement, four priorities, Bhupender Yadav" as this event's fixed fact set.                                             |
|  <b>INTERVIEW</b>      | does a nationally-actionable-priorities approach achieve more durable environmental cooperation than financing-dependent global pledges?   |

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**Question 2**

of 12

[Source →](#)

The Rs 1,943 crore contract signed on August 17, 2026, for two MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones covers a lease of how many months?

- ☐ A 18 months
- ☒ B 30 months ✓
- ☐ C 24 months
- ☐ D 36 months

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The Ministry of Defence signed a Rs 1,943 crore contract with General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. for a 30-month lease of two MQ-9B Sea Guardian High-Altitude Long-Endurance drones for the Indian Navy, signed at Kartavya Bhawan-2, New Delhi. **ANALYSIS:** Leasing rather than outright purchasing lets the Navy rapidly field persistent maritime surveillance capability while larger indigenous or purchase-based drone programmes remain under separate negotiation, a pragmatic bridging strategy for capability gaps.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The MQ-9B Sea Guardian is a High-Altitude Long-Endurance (HALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft System designed for extended maritime surveillance missions, intended here to strengthen the Indian Navy's Maritime Domain Awareness across the Indian Ocean Region. The lease model, distinct from a direct purchase, is increasingly used in Indian defence procurement to field advanced capability quickly without committing to the full lifecycle cost and acquisition timeline of an outright purchase programme, particularly for platforms where indigenous alternatives are still in development. India has previously operated leased MQ-9B variants for maritime surveillance, and this contract extends that operational experience, distinct from the separate, larger multi-year procurement negotiations for a bigger fleet of these platforms that have proceeded on a different, longer timeline through direct government-to-government channels.

**Q2** **CONCEPT KIT****CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 (defence procurement, maritime security, Indian Ocean Region strategy).

**MAINS KEYWORDS**

MQ-9B Sea Guardian, lease model, Maritime Domain Awareness.

**COMMON MISTAKE**

assuming this is an outright purchase; it is specifically a 30-month lease arrangement.

**EXAM TIP**

anchor "Rs 1,943 crore, 2 drones, 30-month lease, General Atomics" as this contract's fixed fact set.

**INTERVIEW**

what are the trade-offs between leasing advanced platforms versus committing to indigenous development for critical defence capabilities?

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**Question 3**

of 12

[Source](#) →

India's first-ever "Guide to Grasslands and Other Open Natural Ecosystems," launched at UNCCD COP17, classifies how many ecosystem types across India?

**A** 12

**B** 18

**C** 24 ✓

**D** 30

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** India launched its first comprehensive guide on grasslands and Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs) at UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on August 17, 2026, classifying 24 ecosystem types across India, spanning grasslands, savannas, scrublands, rocky plateaus, ravines and coastal ecosystems. **ANALYSIS:** A dedicated classification guide signals institutional recognition that Open Natural Ecosystems deserve conservation treatment distinct from forests, since these landscapes have historically been miscategorised as "wastelands" suitable for afforestation, a practice that can damage native grassland ecology rather than restore it.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The guide was produced by ATREE (Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment) in collaboration with the IUCN, CoE-SLM, ICFRE and ISRO's Space Applications Centre, and covers pastoralism, fire ecology and carbon sequestration within these non-forest landscapes. UNCCD COP is the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, a recurring forum for land degradation neutrality and desertification-related commitments, distinct from the UNFCCC (climate) and CBD (biodiversity) conventions, though all three share thematic overlap around land-use and ecosystem health.

India has committed to restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 under its land degradation neutrality targets, and a clearer classification of non-forest ecosystems like grasslands supports more accurate accounting of restoration progress across the full range of India's degraded and semi-degraded landscapes, not forests alone.

**Q3**
 **CONCEPT KIT**

**CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 (environment and ecology, biodiversity conservation).


**MAINS KEYWORDS**

Open Natural Ecosystems, UNCCD COP17, ATREE, land degradation neutrality.


**COMMON MISTAKE**

confusing Open Natural Ecosystems with forests; ONEs are specifically non-forest landscapes like grasslands and scrublands.


**EXAM TIP**

anchor "24 ecosystem types, ATREE-led, UNCCD COP17 Ulaanbaatar" as this guide's fixed fact set.


**INTERVIEW**

why have Open Natural Ecosystems historically received less conservation attention than forests, and what policy changes would correct this?


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**Question 4**

of 12

[Source →](#)

The National Sports Awards 2025, announced August 18, 2026, did not name a recipient for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award for the first time since which year?

**A** 2010

**B** 2012

**C** 2016

**D** 2014 ✓

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The National Sports Awards 2025 named 17 Arjuna Award winners plus one Lifetime Arjuna Award, and 5 Dronacharya Award coaches, but selected no recipient for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, India's highest sporting honour, the first such gap since 2014. **ANALYSIS:** A skipped Khel Ratna year is itself a notable anomaly given the award's otherwise unbroken annual selection history, prompting scrutiny of selection criteria even as a substantial cohort of Arjuna and Dronacharya awardees were named the same year.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

Named Arjuna Award recipients in 2025 include high jumper Tejaswin Shankar, chess players Vidit Gujrathi and Divya Deshmukh, and the badminton pair Treesa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand; Dronacharya Award Lifetime honourees included Dharmendra Singh Yadav (boxing) and Virender Kumar (wrestling). The Khel Ratna, instituted to recognise the most spectacular sporting performance over a period, typically requires an exceptionally high threshold of achievement, and its selection committee's decision not to confer it in a given year, rather than lowering the threshold to ensure an annual recipient, reflects a deliberate merit-based standard, though it has also drawn public debate over selection criteria and process.

**Q4** **CONCEPT KIT****CROSS-PAPER**

GS1 (Persons and Awards in News).

**MAINS KEYWORDS**

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, Arjuna Award, Dronacharya Award.

**COMMON MISTAKE**

assuming no awards were given in 2025; a full slate of Arjuna and Dronacharya awards were conferred, only the Khel Ratna was skipped.

**EXAM TIP**

anchor "no Khel Ratna since 2014, 17 Arjuna + 1 Lifetime, 5 Dronacharya" as this year's fixed fact set.

**INTERVIEW**

should a merit threshold for India's highest sporting honour ever be relaxed to ensure annual recognition, or does that undermine the award's prestige?

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**Question 5**

of 12

[Source →](#)

Exercise MAITREE-XV, which began August 18, 2026, is a joint military exercise between India and which country?

**A** Thailand ✓

**B** Vietnam

**C** Myanmar

**D** Indonesia

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The 15th edition of Exercise MAITREE, an India-Thailand joint military exercise instituted in 2006, commenced on August 18, 2026, at Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp, Surat Thani, Thailand, running until August 31, with an 85-member Indian Army contingent led by troops from 9 Gorkha Rifles. **ANALYSIS:** The exercise's specific focus on jungle-terrain counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism reflects both countries' shared operational interest in this terrain type, distinct from maritime or conventional-warfare-focused bilateral exercises India conducts with other partners.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The previous MAITREE edition was held in September 2025 at Umroi, Meghalaya, indicating the exercise alternates venues between the two countries. Such bilateral defence exercises, tracked by name, partner country, edition number and venue, form a recurring Prelims fact category, and MAITREE specifically supports India's Act East Policy by building interoperability and defence-diplomacy ties with a key Southeast Asian ASEAN neighbour, complementing India's broader engagement with the region across trade, connectivity and security dimensions.

India conducts a range of similarly named bilateral exercises with different partner countries, each testing different operational domains, jungle counter-insurgency with Thailand, maritime security with several Indian Ocean and Pacific partners, and mountain warfare with others, making the specific pairing of exercise name to partner country and terrain focus a frequently tested Prelims distinction.

**Q5**
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 (Act East Policy, India-ASEAN relations); GS3 (defence exercises, counter-terrorism cooperation).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Exercise MAITREE, Act East Policy, jungle-terrain counter-insurgency.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

confusing MAITREE with other India bilateral exercises with different countries (e.g., Garuda with France, Malabar with the US/Japan/Australia).

 **EXAM TIP**

anchor "MAITREE-XV, Thailand, 9 Gorkha Rifles, instituted 2006" as this exercise's fixed fact set.

 **INTERVIEW**

how do jungle-terrain counter-insurgency exercises with Thailand serve India's broader Act East strategic objectives beyond bilateral military ties?

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**Question 6**

of 12

[Source →](#)

The ICAR 97th AGM, held August 18, 2026, reported that what percentage of the 386 new crop varieties released are climate-resilient?

**A** 75%

**B** 94% ✓

**C** 84%

**D** 99%

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The 97th AGM of the ICAR Society, chaired by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at NASC, New Delhi, reviewed 386 new crop varieties released, of which 94% are climate-resilient and 29 are biofortified, alongside a foodgrain output rise of roughly 19 million tonnes. **ANALYSIS:** A 94% climate-resilience rate among newly released varieties signals a deliberate institutional prioritisation of climate adaptation in India's crop-breeding pipeline, relevant given the increasing frequency of weather-related agricultural stress.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The AGM set a roadmap emphasising demand-driven research, ICAR-industry partnerships, integrated farming systems, quality seed availability and continued climate resilience in crop development. ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research), under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, coordinates agricultural research nationally through a network of institutes and state agricultural universities, and its annual general meetings serve as a formal review mechanism for tracking research-to-outcome progress, including headline figures like new variety releases and foodgrain production trends that are frequently cited in agricultural policy discussions.

Biofortification, breeding crop varieties enriched with micronutrients like iron, zinc or vitamin A, addresses hidden hunger distinct from calorie-focused food security, making the 29-biofortified-variety figure a separate, testable dimension of the AGM's reported progress alongside the broader climate-resilience count.

**Q6**
 **CONCEPT KIT**

**CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 (agriculture, science and technology in farming).


**MAINS KEYWORDS**

ICAR, climate-resilient crop varieties, biofortification, demand-driven research.


**COMMON MISTAKE**

conflating the "climate-resilient" percentage (94%) with the "biofortified" count (29 varieties); these are separate, both-testable figures.


**EXAM TIP**

anchor "386 varieties, 94% climate-resilient, 29 biofortified, ~19 million tonnes foodgrain rise" as this AGM's fixed fact set.


**INTERVIEW**

does a research system oriented around new variety releases sufficiently address the separate challenge of farmer adoption of those varieties at scale?


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**Question 7**

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[Source →](#)

August 18, 2026 marks the 81st anniversary of the reported death of which freedom fighter, associated with the Indian National Army?

- ☐ A Bhagat Singh
- ☐ B Chandrashekhar Azad
- ☒ C **Subhas Chandra Bose ✓**
- ☐ D Lala Lajpat Rai

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** August 18, 2026 marks 81 years since Subhas Chandra Bose's reported death following a plane crash in Taihoku (present-day Taipei) on August 18, 1945; he led the Indian National Army (INA) and the Azad Hind (Provisional Government of Free India), representing the armed-struggle strand of India's freedom movement.

**ANALYSIS:** The circumstances of Bose's death remain historically contested, a nuance distinguishing this "reported death" framing from a definitively settled historical fact, relevant to precise answer-writing on this recurring personality.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

For background, this death anniversary is distinct from Parakram Diwas, observed January 23 to mark Bose's birth anniversary, a distinction UPSC aspirants frequently confuse. Bose's political trajectory, from Indian National Congress leadership, including serving as Congress President, to founding the INA with Japanese support during World War II, represents a strand of the independence movement organised around armed resistance and international alliance-building, offering a contrast with the Congress-led constitutional and non-violent strand associated with Gandhi and Nehru, useful for comparative GS1 answers on the freedom movement's multiple parallel strategies.

The INA's Red Fort trials after the war also became a significant nationalist rallying point, further cementing Bose's legacy in India's independence narrative.

**Q7**
 **CONCEPT KIT**

**CROSS-PAPER**

GS1 (modern Indian history, freedom movement personalities).


**MAINS KEYWORDS**

Subhas Chandra Bose, Indian National Army, Azad Hind, Parakram Diwas.


**COMMON MISTAKE**

confusing this death-anniversary observance (August 18) with Parakram Diwas (January 23, his birth anniversary).


**EXAM TIP**

anchor "died August 18, 1945, Taihoku (Taipei); INA and Azad Hind leader" as this personality's fixed fact set.


**INTERVIEW**

how should history education handle unresolved or contested historical facts, like the exact circumstances of Bose's death, without treating speculation as settled fact?


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**Question 8**

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[Source](#) →

The United States sanctioned ICC President Tomoko Akane and a senior trial lawyer on August 18, 2026, a move widely read as retaliation over ICC action concerning which country?

- ☐ A Ukraine
- ☐ B Myanmar
- ☐ C Sudan
- ☒ D Israel ✓

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The US Treasury sanctioned ICC President Tomoko Akane (Japan) and senior trial lawyer Abdoulaye Seye (Senegal) on August 18, 2026, citing their role in ICC investigations of officials from states that have not consented to ICC jurisdiction, a move widely read as retaliation over ICC action concerning Israel; the ICC called the sanctions a "flagrant attack" on its independence. **ANALYSIS:** Sanctioning individual ICC officials, rather than formally withdrawing recognition of the court, represents a targeted pressure tactic distinct from outright institutional non-cooperation, aimed at constraining specific personnel rather than the institution's legal authority itself.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

India is not a State Party to the Rome Statute, the treaty establishing the ICC, and has historically maintained a cautious, sovereignty-first position toward the court, similar to several other major states including the US itself, China and Russia. This episode illustrates a broader pattern of tension between international judicial institutions and powerful states that have not ratified their founding treaties, relevant to GS2 discussions on the erosion or contestation of multilateral judicial authority in an era of renewed great-power competition.

The ICC, established under the Rome Statute of 1998 and seated at The Hague, prosecutes individuals for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and aggression, distinct from the International Court of Justice, which handles disputes between states, a distinction frequently tested in GS2 international-institutions questions.

**Q8**
 **CONCEPT KIT**

**CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 (international organisations, India and the ICC/Rome Statute).


**MAINS KEYWORDS**

International Criminal Court, Rome Statute, sanctions on ICC officials.


**COMMON MISTAKE**

assuming India is a State Party to the Rome Statute and thus bound by ICC jurisdiction; India has never ratified it.


**EXAM TIP**

anchor "Tomoko Akane (President), Abdoulaye Seye (lawyer), sanctioned over Israel-related ICC action" as this event's fixed fact set.


**INTERVIEW**

what does the sanctioning of individual international-court officials reveal about the limits of international judicial authority over powerful non-member states?


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**Question 9**

of 12

[Source](#) →

A Hindu editorial on the Green India Mission cites a CAG performance audit finding what share of ecological restoration targets was actually achieved?

**A** Under 8% ✓

**B** Around 25%

**C** Around 40%

**D** Over 60%

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The Hindu editorial cites a CAG performance audit finding the Green India Mission achieved less than 8% of its ecological restoration targets despite extensive sapling-planting drives, exposing a decade-long gap between the mission's stated ambition and actual ground reality. **ANALYSIS:** The editorial's central argument is that sapling-planting counts, an easily reported activity metric, obscured this stark restoration shortfall, which only became visible through an independent CAG audit examining actual outcome-level achievement.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The Green India Mission is one of eight missions under India's National Action Plan on Climate Change, targeting forest and ecosystem restoration. The editorial identifies invasive species and mining-related land degradation as the actual ecological stressors that tree-planting alone cannot reverse, arguing genuine restoration requires directly addressing these stressors rather than relying on planting-activity counts as a proxy for restoration success, a distinction between output metrics and outcome metrics relevant across many government scheme evaluations, not forestry alone.

The CAG's constitutional role under Article 148, auditing the accounts of the Union and states, makes its performance audits an important independent check on scheme implementation, distinct from a ministry's own self-reported progress figures, which the editorial implicitly contrasts with the CAG's more sobering, independently verified findings.

**Q9**  **CONCEPT KIT**

|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <b>CROSS-PAPER</b>    | GS3 (environment, forest conservation); GS2 (performance audits, CAG's constitutional role).                                                                      |
|  <b>MAINS KEYWORDS</b> | Green India Mission, CAG performance audit, output vs outcome metrics.                                                                                            |
|  <b>COMMON MISTAKE</b> | assuming the editorial opposes sapling planting itself; it argues planting counts are an inadequate proxy for actual restoration, not that planting has no value. |
|  <b>EXAM TIP</b>       | anchor "under 8% restoration achieved, CAG audit, invasive species and mining as real stressors" as this editorial's fixed fact set.                              |
|  <b>INTERVIEW</b>      | should government schemes be legally required to report outcome-level metrics, not just activity-level metrics, to Parliament?                                    |

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**Question 10**

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[Source →](#)

A Business Standard editorial on Indian overseas migration cites a NITI Aayog study finding that which sector accounts for 71.3% of NSDC International-facilitated placements?

- ☐ A Healthcare
- ☐ B Information Technology
- ☐ C Logistics
- ☒ D Construction ✓

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** A NITI Aayog study cited by Business Standard finds India has the world's largest overseas migrant population (18.5 million) and is the top remittance recipient, but its emigration pipeline remains skewed toward low-skilled work, with construction alone accounting for 71.3% of NSDC International-facilitated placements. **ANALYSIS:** The editorial's core argument is that this skew represents an underexploited opportunity, since higher-skilled emigration into sectors like infrastructure, logistics, IT and healthcare typically commands higher wages, meaning a shift in composition, not volume, would raise remittance value per migrant.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

NSDC International is the international placement arm of the National Skill Development Corporation, facilitating Indian workers' placement in overseas jobs. The editorial calls for states to build dedicated migration systems, specialised recruitment agencies, targeted language and vocational training aligned with destination-country requirements, and digital dashboards matching workers to real-time overseas labour demand, treating migration facilitation as a deliberate economic-development strategy rather than a byproduct of individual worker initiative, distinguishing migration volume (where India already leads) from migration skill composition (where the study finds a persistent gap). Several Indian states, notably Kerala and Punjab, have long-standing informal migration economies built around specific overseas labour corridors, and formalising this through dedicated state institutions could extend similar structured pathways to other states with growing overseas-employment interest but less-developed migration infrastructure.

**Q10**  **CONCEPT KIT**

|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <b>CROSS-PAPER</b>    | GS3 (Indian economy, remittances, labour migration); GS2 (skill development policy).                                                               |
|  <b>MAINS KEYWORDS</b> | NITI Aayog migration study, NSDC International, skill-composition gap.                                                                             |
|  <b>COMMON MISTAKE</b> | assuming India's migration challenge is about insufficient volume; the study finds India already leads in volume, the gap is in skill composition. |
|  <b>EXAM TIP</b>       | anchor "18.5 million migrants (world's largest), construction 71.3% of NSDC International placements" as this study's fixed fact set.              |
|  <b>INTERVIEW</b>      | which level of government is best positioned to build migration-facilitation infrastructure, states, the centre, or a joint mechanism?             |

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**Question 11**

of 12

[Source →](#)

An Indian Express editorial on engineering education argues that generative AI complicates traditional assessment because it makes which specific method less reliable?

- ☐ A Practical laboratory demonstrations
- ☐ B Industry internship evaluations
- ☒ C **Written examinations and assignments ✓**
- ☐ D Peer-reviewed research publications

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** The Indian Express editorial argues India expanded engineering education access since the early 2000s without proportionally improving quality, faculty strength, industry linkage and pedagogy, and that this quality gap is sharpened by generative AI, which makes traditional assessment methods like written examinations and take-home assignments less reliable indicators of genuine student learning, since AI tools can produce competent-seeming answers without the student having mastered the underlying material. **ANALYSIS:** The editorial connects a longstanding higher-education quality debate to a genuinely new technological disruption, arguing the two problems compound each other rather than existing independently.

**📖 CONCEPT NOTE**

The editorial calls for shifting evaluation from counting seats filled and degrees awarded toward measuring demonstrated learning outcomes and actual employability, metrics harder to game than traditional written assessments now compromised by generative AI. This reflects a broader credentialing-versus-competence tension relevant across higher education generally, not engineering alone, where formal credentials increasingly diverge from directly demonstrated capability, a gap generative AI's disruption of conventional assessment methods has made more visible and urgent to address through alternative evaluation approaches. India's All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) regulates engineering education standards nationally, and periodic debates over surplus engineering capacity versus quality assurance have recurred since the early-2000s expansion, making this editorial's framing a continuation of a long-running policy conversation rather than an entirely novel critique.

**Q11**
 **CONCEPT KIT**

**CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 (higher education policy, employability); GS3 (generative AI's disruptive effects).


**MAINS KEYWORDS**

engineering education quality gap, generative AI assessment disruption, demonstrated learning outcomes.


**COMMON MISTAKE**

assuming the editorial calls for reversing access expansion; it explicitly separates the (positive) access achievement from the (unresolved) quality gap.


**EXAM TIP**

anchor "expansion since early 2000s, faculty/industry-linkage/pedagogy gaps, generative AI undermines written assessment" as this editorial's fixed fact set.


**INTERVIEW**

what alternative assessment mechanisms could reliably measure demonstrated engineering competence at scale without being easily gamed?


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**Question 12**

of 12

[Source →](#)

A Down to Earth editorial on the Vishnugad-Pipalkoti hydro tunnel disaster in Chamoli attributes the fatal flooding to excavation breaching which specific hazard?

- ☐ A An unmapped fault line
- ☒ B A pressurised aquifer ✓
- ☐ C A methane pocket
- ☐ D An unstable sedimentary layer

**ANSWER & ANALYSIS**
**✓ EXPLANATION**

**FACT:** Down to Earth attributes the fatal flooding at the Vishnugad-Pipalkoti hydro tunnel, Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, to excavation breaching a pressurised aquifer that conventional sparse-borehole surveys had failed to detect within the complex, tectonically active Himalayan fault system. **ANALYSIS:** The editorial frames this as an information failure rather than a construction-execution failure, arguing the root problem is inadequate subsurface hydrogeological assessment methodology, not inadequate construction-safety protocols applied to already-known ground conditions.

**📌 CONCEPT NOTE**

The editorial situates this incident within a broader, recurring pattern of Himalayan tunnel disasters, arguing sparse borehole sampling is structurally inadequate for characterising the complex, localised hydrology of young, tectonically active fault zones. Its proposed remedy is mandatory real-time hydrogeological mapping conducted continuously during excavation, combined with advanced probe-drilling ahead of the tunnel face, treating this as a necessary standard practice given the recurring human and financial costs of disasters discovered only by triggering them, rather than an optional, cost-driven discretionary choice for individual projects.

The editorial cites a 2009 aquifer breach at the nearby Tapovan-Vishnugad hydro project as historical precedent, reinforcing its argument that inadequate subsurface risk assessment is a systemic, recurring gap in Himalayan hydropower development rather than a one-off failure specific to this particular tunnel.

**Q12**  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS1 (Himalayan geology and tectonics); GS3 (disaster management, infrastructure risk assessment).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Vishnugad-Pipalkoti tunnel, pressurised aquifer, real-time hydrogeological mapping.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

treating this as primarily a construction-safety or engineering-execution failure; the editorial specifically frames it as an information-gap failure in pre-construction and during-construction geological assessment.

 **EXAM TIP**

anchor "Chamoli, pressurised aquifer, sparse boreholes inadequate, real-time mapping proposed" as this incident's fixed fact set.

 **INTERVIEW**

should India mandate real-time hydrogeological monitoring as a legal requirement for all Himalayan tunnelling projects, regardless of added cost and time?

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