1. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 1, 2 and 3:

Across the Brahmaputra valley and the hill states that cradle it, development has often been narrated as a story of bridges, corridors, and connectivity, yet those narratives omit the quieter arithmetic of forests thinned, slopes destabilized, and rivers asked to carry more than water. In Assam’s middle reaches, embankments built to discipline floods have in places redirected fury rather than reduced it, transferring risk from one bank to the other as channels meander and silt lifts the riverbed closer to the brim. In Meghalaya’s plateau, a century-old choreography of sacred groves has guarded springs through customary rules that predate modern statutes; where those rules weaken, the springs’ voices lower to a whisper, and summer queues lengthen for a plastic can’s worth of water. Arunachal’s east bears witness to a paradox: hydropower projects promise renewable energy, yet the impoundments, access roads, and blasting re-script the very riparian habitats whose resilience underwrites the region’s monsoon pulse. Tripura’s plantations, neat in rows, fill satellite pictures with the comfort of tree cover while leaving biodiversity threads frayed, a textile that looks whole from far but snags at every touch.

Meanwhile, downstream towns learn that “flood protection” is a moving target—what protects a district this year may push the crest toward another next year, as spurs and revetments change the river’s grammar without revising its memory. Tea estates recount their own ledgers: rising input costs to stabilize gullies after cloudbursts, shade trees selected as much for root architecture as for leaf. In the hills of Manipur and Nagaland, road realignments shave minutes off travel time but add minutes of anxiety each time a pre-monsoon squall tests cut slopes scarred by quick excavation. The promise of connectivity, real and felt, runs against the patience that landscapes demand—drains that must be cleared before first rain, culverts that must be sized for wood and boulder, not merely for water, and embankments that must be inspected as living edges rather than static lines. To speak honestly about progress here is to hold contradictions at once and to admit that maps of gains and losses cannot be drawn with a single pen, nor read in a single language.

The discussion of sacred groves in Meghalaya primarily serves to show that  
(A) traditional institutions can sustain springs and water security  
(B) customary rules are obsolete against drought  
(C) plateau hydrology is unaffected by cultural practices  
(D) tree cover metrics always capture ecosystem health

2. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 4, 5 and 6:

On an August afternoon, a classroom in Aizawl debated whether “connectivity” meant roads or relationships. The teacher drew a line from bamboo clumps to landslide frequency, from slash-and-burn cycles to the mosaic of secondary growth, and from the new highway to the changing cadence of markets and migration. Students traced how a month of persistent drizzle turns quickly to catastrophe when a hillside terraced more for speed than stability lets go; the same stretch, a year later, might be praised for reducing travel time by hours. What goes missing in celebratory inaugurations is the ledger of maintenance: drains cleared before the cloudburst, culverts right-sized for debris, slopes replanted with species whose roots stitch clay to stone. The city’s silhouette, hemmed by ridgelines, asks a different kind of engineering—one that hears soil as a language and never mistakes concrete for comprehension.

In workshops with ward committees, a quieter truth emerges: maintenance has no ribbon to cut, yet it is the ribbon that ties a city together when monsoon arrives unscheduled. Engineers admit that budgets find it easier to buy asphalt than to fund the hands that keep drains alive; contractors prefer visible stretches to invisible subsoil. The debate turns from what to build to how to steward: slope drains that talk to each other, culverts that do not choke on first cargo of leaves, and right-of-way rules that do not turn every verge into a dump that returns to the road in rain. Connectivity, the class concludes, is an ecosystem—of labor, listening, and long memory—not a single carriageway.

The classroom debate frames “connectivity” as  
(A) only a metric of kilometers built  
(B) a balance between physical links and social-ecological ties  
(C) an outdated concept in mountain regions  
(D) synonymous with migration out of the state

3. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 7, 8 and 9:

In the char lands of the Brahmaputra—sandbars that appear, vanish, and reappear with a cartographer’s exasperation—families rebuild houses more frequently than census takers can assign a permanent address. A flood season’s geometry decides where schools will stand and where they will be carried in pieces to higher ground. Health workers learn to be amphibious, tracking vaccination schedules by boat, rumor, and memory. The state’s relief arrives as tarpaulins and ration rice; resilience arrives as collective labor and a grammar of improvisation: bamboo anchored with jute rope, fish smoked for the weeks when currents turn brown with silt, and a village bell rung not for prayer but for the sound that carries in rain.

Yet, the chars are not only emergency stages; they are economic classrooms. Mustard follows receding water as if reading a timetable; gourds climb trellises that outlive the season, and cattle know the new edges before surveyors do. Credit is informal, repaid in labor after the waters fall. Teachers instruct with maps that confess their own uncertainty, and students learn to spell home with coordinates that may need revision next year. When outsiders ask why anyone stays, the answer is not obstinacy; it is that the river, fickle as it is, still feeds, and that belonging is not a deed but a practice—a way of learning a shoreline that refuses to learn one’s name.

The bell rung “for the sound that carries in rain” primarily symbolizes  
(A) rejection of traditional rituals  
(B) an early warning and coordination mechanism  
(C) a call to abandon fishing  
(D) celebration of river festivals

4. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 10, 11 and 12:

On the road to Tawang, prayer flags speak in colors to wind that remembers avalanches. At every bend, a signboard lists altitudes like achievements, but the snowlines are learning new arithmetic. What used to be a seasonal hush has become a conversation of meltwater at hours when the sun used to be too shy to intrude. Villages downstream have learned a new calendar of outburst floods, annotated by WhatsApp warnings and temple loudspeakers. Glaciers, which once felt like old relatives—distant, formidable, and reliable—now feel like teenagers: changing fast, sometimes sullen, sometimes reckless. Hydropower tunnels grudgingly accept silt loads they were not designed to swallow; turbines rasp, and the accountants widen their margins. To live with mountains is to be a student of time; the syllabus has been revised mid-term.

This revision also writes itself into agriculture and ritual. Barley sowing shifts by a fortnight; pastures open sooner but tire earlier, and herders add unfamiliar salt licks to rations as mineral balances slide. Pilgrimage schedules stitch in meteorological caution, and insurance agents learn to pronounce names of lakes whose moraine walls have become risk vocabulary. The army’s supply lines rebuild contingency for bridges that will stand until they don’t. Each institution learns a new humility: planning now includes an extra column titled “what if the mountains answer differently this year?”

The mention of hydropower tunnels “accepting silt loads” suggests  
(A) improved turbine efficiency  
(B) unexpected maintenance and operational stress  
(C) complete protection from glacier outbursts  
(D) reduction in sediment transport

5. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 13, 14 and 15:

Sikkim’s October remembered more than autumn: a sudden release from a high-altitude lake stitched a thread of destruction down valleys where bridges had names like promises. The disaster report would later balance columns of antecedents—rainfall anomalies, moraine fragility, upstream works—with columns of consequences—loss of life, pylons tilted, fields salted by debris. But between those columns live the equations that never quite resolve: how to price the proverb that warned elders not to sleep by “restless water,” how to factor in the value of a footbridge that reduced a mother’s weekly market trek by hours, how to model the grief-taught skill of reading cloud shapes for danger. Insurance adjusters enumerate what can be counted; a community inventories what must be remembered.

In the weeks that followed, relief supplies raced gravity, and so did rumors. Volunteers learned that a list is not a map; a map is not a path; and a path can vanish with one night of rain. Committees argued over the sequence of rebuilding—schools before shops, or shops before schools—because a town breathes with both lungs. Counselors set up tents where arithmetic met mourning, and local radio became the village square. After the waters receded, the valley tallied not only what it lost but what it learned: that early warning must be a sentence everyone can finish, that drills are not rehearsals but languages, and that trust is the strongest bridge.

The contrast between “insurance adjusters” and “community inventories” highlights  
(A) identical methods of assessment  
(B) tension between quantitative losses and qualitative memory  
(C) the supremacy of actuarial science  
(D) a preference for myth over data

6. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 16, 17 and 18:

In Nagaland’s hills, jhum fields lie at the intersection of ecology and politics, where fallow cycles function as both livelihood strategy and land tenure statement. A five-year rest was once a minimum courtesy paid to soil; now shortened rotations, driven by population pressure and market pull, turn courtesy into compromise. Critics frame jhum as inherently destructive; practitioners respond that the destruction lies not in the practice but in its distortion—without the communal calendars, controlled burns, and mixed-crop wisdom, any field would fail. Extension officers arrive with brochures; elders counter with seed baskets. Somewhere between them, a new grammar may be written, where contour bunds and agroforestry borrow from both worlds and the hillside reads the script in green.

Trials in a handful of villages sketch possibilities: bamboo hedgerows that slow runoff and gift stakes; interplanted fruit trees that lengthen the season of income; and women’s cooperatives that bank seeds and stories together so that agronomy travels with memory. Markets, too, can be taught manners—buyers agree to grade produce by taste and resilience, not just shine. The politics of jhum, ultimately, is the politics of patience; soil cannot be hurried, but it can be respected into abundance.

The phrase “elders counter with seed baskets” symbolizes  
(A) refusal to modernize  
(B) evidence-based traditional expertise  
(C) dependence on food aid  
(D) focus on monoculture

7. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 19, 20 and 21:

Manipur’s valley and hills negotiate water as unequals. In Imphal, drains carry plastic along with runoff, turning a monsoon afternoon into a public seminar on urban design; in the hills, springs that have named villages for generations arrive late, leave early, and sometimes do not show. The recent memory of conflict shadows public works: a culvert becomes a checkpoint in rumor, and a water tanker’s route is mapped not only by hydraulics but by trust. In such a landscape, a policy that presumes frictionless delivery learns quickly that pipes do not just carry water; they carry politics. The best engineers learn to read minutes as carefully as meters.

A pilot program tried to braid these threads: youth groups audited leaks and blockages, women’s committees set rosters for spring protection, and municipal staff discovered that de-silting a drain is also a conversation about livelihoods for those who live by it. The report card did not claim miracles; it claimed maps annotated with relationships as much as with gradients, and work orders that learned to speak two languages—one of flow, one of fairness.

The phrase “read minutes as carefully as meters” suggests effective engineers must  
(A) avoid attending meetings  
(B) prioritize technical measurements over all else  
(C) engage with institutional processes and community decisions  
(D) disregard governance constraints

8. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 22, 23 and 24:

In Meghalaya’s coal country, a decade of reportage has turned the phrase “rat-hole mining” into a metonym for risk: shafts as narrow as a man’s shoulders, ladders that remember only ascent, and a geology that forgives until it doesn’t. Advocates point to school fees paid and roofs repaired; opponents point to streams turned the color of rust and lungs that labor by forty. The policy debate swings between prohibition and regularization, while enforcement staggers under the weight of terrain, economics, and complicity. The most honest sentence in the entire discourse may be the simplest: livelihoods cannot be banned; they must be transformed.

Transformation, however, needs scaffolding: alternative jobs that are not only promised but practiced, a reclamation economy that pays as much to heal a slope as to hurt it, and medical screening that treats miners’ bodies as ledgers to be balanced, not debts to be written off. Schools must smell of chalk rather than coal dust, and rivers must be made to remember their original clarity. The law, if it is to be law, must stop oscillating between spectacle raids and blind eyes, and become a steady hand that guides a hard transition.

The phrase “streams turned the color of rust” most likely refers to  
(A) natural seasonal variation  
(B) acid mine drainage and contamination  
(C) improved water quality measures  
(D) intentional dyeing for monitoring

9. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 25, 26 and 27:

In the Barak basin, the promise of flood moderation through upstream structures collides with the reality that sediment budgets are not line items easily balanced. A dam’s reservoir may trap the very silt that downstream farmers have counted on to renew their fields, prompting a quiet decline in soil fertility even as the river runs clearer. Meanwhile, embankments that fail at their weakest link convert a predicted inundation into an unruly torrent, spreading damages nonlinearly. To govern a river is to inherit its memory: paleochannels that wake in heavy rain, sandbars that migrate like itinerant laborers, and distributaries that do not always distribute evenly. Plans drawn on dry-season paper can dissolve in first-spate water.

Negotiations over releases turn into theater where each actor reads a different script—power producers count megawatts, farmers count millimeters of moisture, and fishers count days of turbidity that cue migration. A basin authority sketches a comprehensive vision, but the river attends to physics more than to minutes of meetings. In years when monsoon stutters, the conflict is muted; in years when it roars, every microphone finds an audience and no one finds enough sandbags.

The description of embankment failure indicates that damages  
(A) scale linearly with breach size  
(B) can escalate unpredictably due to systemic weaknesses  
(C) are confined to the immediate breach location  
(D) are easily contained by distributaries

10. Read the following passage carefully and answer Question Nos. 28, 29 and 30:

Across Mizoram and southern Assam, a new cartography of landslide risk has replaced tourist brochures in the public imagination. What earlier was a monsoon inconvenience is now a season-long negotiation: school calendars written in pencil, supply chains that budget for detours, and a citizen’s weather app that has acquired the intimacy of a family member. In villages perched on knife-edge ridges, the difference between a near miss and a headline is sometimes a roadside drain cleared on a Tuesday. The question hanging over every project file is not whether to build, but how to build and maintain in a world where yesterday’s slope is not today’s. Resilience here is not an abstraction; it is a shovel, a schedule, and a stubbornness that keeps the road open one more day.

The grammar of prevention, locals say, is mostly verbs: to clear, to anchor, to revegetate, to inspect. Sensors help, but their sentences still need subjects—people who read their warnings and move stones before stones move people. Insurance, where available, prices risk as if roads were numbers and not lifelines; yet shopkeepers know that a fortnight’s closure can unravel a season’s profit. In the end, the best technology is attention paid on time. The best innovation is continuity of care for things that look inert until they slide.

The phrase “a citizen’s weather app… intimacy of a family member” suggests that people  
(A) ignore weather updates during monsoon  
(B) have integrated real-time risk information into daily life  
(C) distrust forecasts entirely  
(D) rely solely on official advisories without local judgment