PhysicsByAaryan

TIFR Physics 2026

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Classical Mechanics

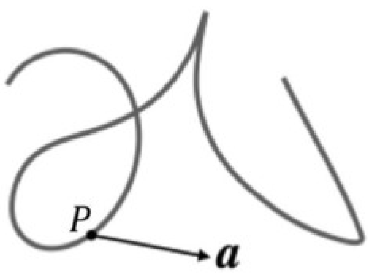
Q1. [TIFR_2026_A_Q1]
Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Basic Mechanics · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

(1) Is it possible for the trajectory of a particle in a two-dimensional plane with a continuous velocity and acceleration to have the shape shown in the figure?

(2) Is it possible for its acceleration vector at P on the trajectory to point in the direction, $\boldsymbol{a}$, as shown?

(a) (1) Yes (2) No
(b) (1) Yes (2) Yes
(c) (1) No (2) No
(d) (1) No (2) Yes



Q2. [TIFR_2026_A_Q2]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Bulk Matter · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

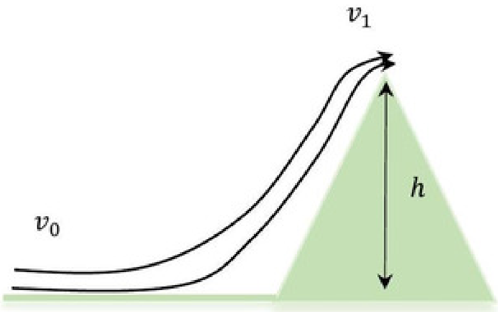
A steady, incompressible air stream of density $\rho = 1.2\,\mathrm{kg/m^3}$ blows horizontally at $v_0 = 15\,\mathrm{m/s}$ towards a hill of height $h = 50\,\mathrm{m}$. Because the streamlines constrict over the hilltop, the air speed there increases to $v_1 = 19.5\,\mathrm{m/s}$. The difference between the pressure at the base and the hilltop is closest to :

(a) $681\ \mathrm{N/m^2}$

(b) $495\ \mathrm{N/m^2}$

(c) $588\ \mathrm{N/m^2}$

(d) $93\,\mathrm{N/m^2}$



Q3. [TIFR_2026_A_Q21]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Central Forces, Gravitation and Universe · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

A relativistic particle of mass m moving under the central force of gravity with angular momentum L around a massive body of mass M experiences the following potential:

$$V(r) = -\frac{GMm}{r} + \frac{L^2}{2mr^2} - \frac{GML^2}{mc^2r^3}$$

where the last term is the relativistic correction to the Newtonian formula. For sufficiently large L, the particle has:

(a) Two circular orbits. The smaller one is unstable and the larger is stable

(b) Two circular orbits. The smaller one is stable and the larger is unstable

(c) Three circular orbits. The middle one is unstable and the others stable

(d) Three circular orbits. The middle one is stable and the others unstable

Q4. [TIFR_2026_A_Q24]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Bulk Matter · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

The longitudinal disturbance generated by an earthquake, travels through the earth's crust and reaches 1000 km in 3 mins from the epicentre of the earthquake. Assuming the density of the Earth's crust is $2700\,\mathrm{kg/m^3}$, the Bulk's modulus of the crust is closest to:

(Ignore the shear modulus and local variations in the density and the Bulk modulus.)

(a) $8.3 \times 10^{10}\ \mathrm{N\,m^{-2}}$

(b) $2.1 \times 10^{11}\ N\,\mathrm{m^{-2}}$

(c) $8.3 \times 10^{8}\ N\,\mathrm{m^{-2}}$

(d) $2.1 \times 10^{9}\ \mathrm{N\,m^{-2}}$

Q5. [TIFR_2026_B_Q1]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Rotational Motion · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

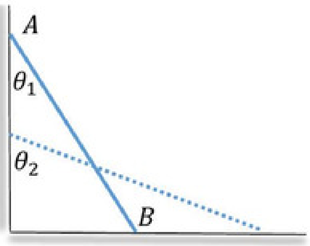
Consider a uniform rod with length L and mass m with one end A on the wall and the other end B on the ground. Initially it is at rest at an angle θ_1 with the wall and starts slipping. What is the speed of A when the ladder's angle with the wall is θ_2 ? Ignore friction. (FYI: The moment of inertia of a uniform rod about its centre is $I = \frac{1}{12} mL^2$.)

(a) $\sin\theta_2\sqrt{3gL(\cos\theta_1 - \cos\theta_2)}$

(b) $\sqrt{3gL(\cos\theta_1 - \cos\theta_2)}$

(c) $\sqrt{12gL(\cos\theta_1 - \cos\theta_2)}$

(d) $\sin\theta_2\sqrt{6gL(\cos\theta_1 - \cos\theta_2)}$



Q6. [TIFR_2026_B_Q3]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Special Theory of Relativity · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

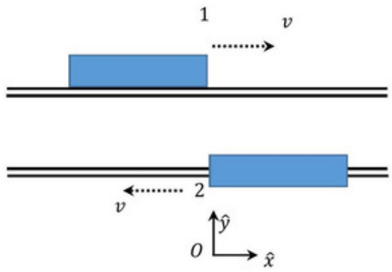
Two trains of proper length L each move on neighbouring tracks. An observer at rest with the tracks, O, notes the speed of train 1 to be $v\hat{x}$ and train 2 to be $-v\hat{x}$. O also notes that at $t = 0$ the front ends of the two trains have the same x position, $x = 0$. According to a train engineer sitting at the front of train 1 , what is the time interval between the passing by of the front and the back of train 2 ?

(a) $\frac{L}{2v}(1 - v^2/c^2)$

(b) $\frac{L}{2v}\sqrt{1 - v^2/c^2}$

(c) $\frac{L}{2v}\sqrt{\frac{1-v^2/c^2}{1+v^2/c^2}}$

(d) $\frac{L}{2v}$



Q7. [TIFR_2026_B_Q4]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Basic Mechanics · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

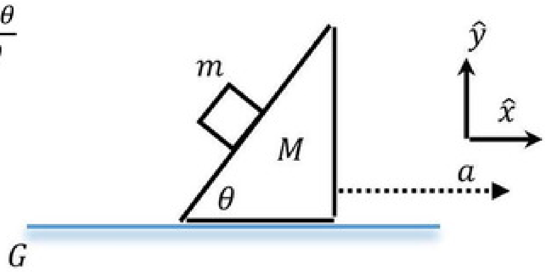
A mass m is placed on a wedge of mass M and angle θ as shown, which in turn is placed on the horizontal ground. Initially, m and M are at rest with respect to the ground and are released from this position. What is the acceleration a of M ? Assume that all surfaces are frictionless.

(a) $a = \frac{mg\cos\theta\sin\theta}{M+m\sin^2\theta}$

(b) $a = \frac{mg\cos\theta}{M+m}$

(c) $a = \frac{mg\sin\theta}{M+m}$

(d) $a = 0$



Q8. [TIFR_2026_B_Q8]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Central Forces, Gravitation and Universe · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

An earth imaging satellite is in a near earth circular orbit (see figure) with an orbital period of 100 minutes and observes earth with a light of wavelength 550 nm . If it can resolve the ground with 0.5 m , the minimum diameter of the mirror on the satellite should be closest to:

(Assume the system is diffraction limited. The mass and radius of Earth are 5.97×10^{24} kg and 6.4×10^{3} km, respectively.)

(a) 1 m

(b) 5 m

(c) 0.5 m

(d) 10 m

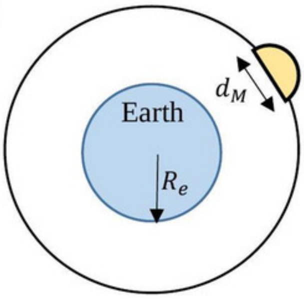


Figure not to scale

Q9. [TIFR_2026_C_Q5]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Basic Mechanics · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

A classical particle of mass m moving in the $x - y$ plane is constrained to move along the curve $x^4 + y^4 = 1$. There are no other external forces acting on it. If (r, θ) are the polar co-ordinates, which of the following is true?

(a) $\ddot{\theta} + 2\frac{\dot{r}\dot{\theta}}{r} \propto r^2 \sin 4\theta$

(b) $\ddot{\theta} \propto r^2 \sin 4\theta$

(c) $\ddot{\theta} \propto r^4 \sin^2 2\theta$

(d) $\ddot{\theta} + 2\frac{\dot{r}\dot{\theta}}{r} \propto r^4 \sin^2 2\theta$

Q10. [TIFR_2026_C_Q6]

Year 2026 · Classical Mechanics · Special Theory of Relativity · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

A particle of rest mass m moving at a relativistic speed v collides with an identical particle at rest and merges with it to form a composite of rest mass $M = \frac{4}{\sqrt{3}}m$. What is the ratio of the speed of M to the initial speed v ?

(a) $\frac{5}{8}$

(b) $\frac{1}{2}$

(c) $\frac{3}{5}$

(d) $\frac{2}{3}$

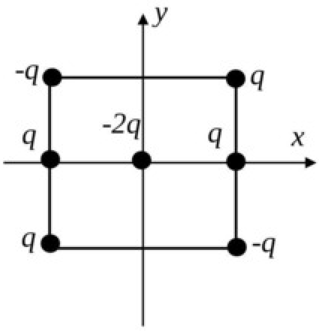
Electromagnetism

Q11. [TIFR_2026_A_Q15]

Year 2026 · Electromagnetism · Multipole Expansion · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

The figure on the right, shows point charges arranged in the x, y plane on the centre, vertices, and some edges of a square with vertices at ($\pm 1, \pm 1, 0$) in standard units. Given the charge distribution in the figure, the electric field far away from the charges ($r = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2 + z^2}$ denotes the distance from the origin) falls off as:



(a) $\frac{1}{r^4}$

(b) $\frac{1}{r^2}$

(c) $\frac{1}{r^3}$

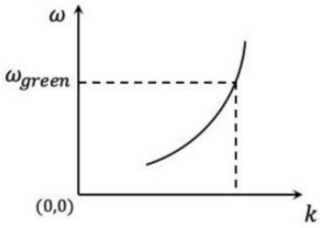
(d) $\frac{1}{r^5}$

Q12. [TIFR_2026_A_Q17]

Year 2026 · Electromagnetism · EM Waves · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

For a medium, the dispersion relation for the propagation of light is shown below on a linear scale:



Here, ω_{green} is the frequency of the green light. Which of the following statements is correct?

(a) The phase velocity for the green light is smaller than the group velocity at that frequency

(b) The refractive index of the medium for the red light is smaller than that for the blue light

(c) The phase velocity of the green light is larger than the group velocity at that frequency

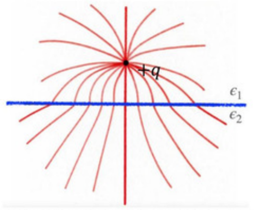
(d) The speed of light in this medium for green light is same as that in vacuum

Q13. [TIFR_2026_A_Q5]

Year 2026 · Electromagnetism · Image Problems · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

The figure on the right shows a positive point charge ($+q$) placed above an interface (horizontal line in the figure) between two dielectrics with permittivities, ϵ_1 and ϵ_2. The curves shown are field lines of the electric displacement, $\vec{D}$. Which of the following statements is true?



(a) $\epsilon_2 > \epsilon_1$ and the sign of the net surface charge at the interface is negative

(b) $\epsilon_1 > \epsilon_2$ and the sign of the net surface charge at the interface is positive

(c) $\epsilon_2 > \epsilon_1$ and the sign of the net surface charge at the interface is positive

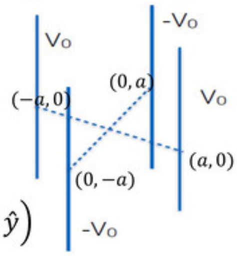
(d) $\epsilon_1 > \epsilon_2$ and the sign of the net surface charge at the interface is negative

Q14. [TIFR_2026_A_Q7]

Year 2026 · Electromagnetism · Electrostatics · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Four infinitely long electrodes of negligible thickness are placed parallel to the z axis and pass through the points at the edges of a square in the (x, y) plane at ($\pm a, 0$) and ($0, \pm a$). The potential at $(0,0)$ is 0 . If the electrodes at $(\pm a, 0)$ are maintained at a potential V_0, while the electrodes at ($0, \pm a$) are maintained at a potential $-V_0$, the electric field in the vicinity of the electrodes is given by:



(a) $\vec{E} = -\frac{2V_0}{a^2}(x\hat{x} - y\hat{y})$

(b) $\vec{E} = -\frac{V_0}{a}(\hat{x} - \hat{y})$

(c) $\vec{E} = \frac{2\pi V_0}{a^2}\left(\sin\left(\frac{2\pi x}{a}\right)\hat{x} - \sin\left(\frac{2\pi y}{a}\right)\hat{y}\right)$

(d) $\vec{E} = -\frac{V_0}{x^2+y^2}(\hat{x} - \hat{y})$

Q15. [TIFR_2026_B_Q11]

Year 2026 · Electromagnetism · Electrostatics · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

The vector field, $E = \left(2xy^2 + z^3, 2x^2y, 3xz^2\right)\mathrm{V/m}$, gives the electric field in a region where (x, y, z) are the cartesian coordinates, given in metres. The difference in electric potential between the two points with coordinates $(x, y, z) = (1,1,1)$ and $(x, y, z) = (1,2,3)$, is given by:

(a) $-29\ \mathrm{V}$

(b) $-16\ \mathrm{V}$

(c) $0\ \mathrm{V}$

(d) An electric potential cannot be defined for this electric field configuration

Q16. **[TIFR_2026_B_Q2]**
Year 2026 · Electromagnetism · Electrodynamics · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

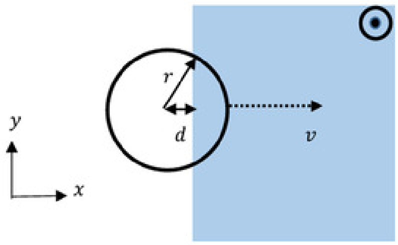
A metallic ring of radius r is pushed into a region of uniform magnetic field $B\hat{z}$ (shaded region) with a constant speed v as shown. The magnetic field is 0 outside. The electrical resistance of the loop is R. What is the external force one needs to apply on the loop to maintain its speed, when the distance of the region's edge to the centre is $d(> 0)$?

(a) $\frac{4r^2B^2v}{R}\left(1-\frac{d^2}{r^2}\right)\hat{x}$

(b) $\frac{\pi r^2B^2v}{R}\left(1+\frac{d^2}{r^2}\right)\hat{x}$

(c) $\frac{r^2B^2v}{R}\left(1+\frac{d}{r}\right)\hat{x}$

(d) $\frac{\pi r^2B^2v}{R}\left(1-\frac{d}{r}\right)\hat{x}$



Q17. **[TIFR_2026_C_Q7]**
Year 2026 · Electromagnetism · Relativistic EMT · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

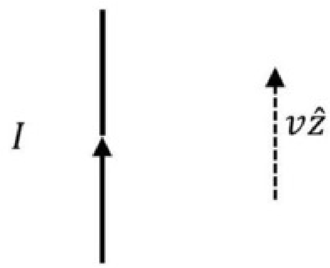
For a static observer, an infinite wire of negligible thickness with no net charge density placed along z direction carries a current I. Another observer is moving along the current with a relativistic speed v. The magnitude of the linear charge density on the wire seen by the moving observer is:

(a) $\frac{Iv}{c\sqrt{c^2-v^2}}$

(b) $\frac{I}{\sqrt{c^2-v^2}}$

(c) $\frac{I\sqrt{c^2-v^2}}{vc}$

(d) 0



Q18. [TIFR_2026_C_Q8]

Year 2026 · Electromagnetism · EM Waves · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

A plane electromagnetic wave with an electric field

$$\vec{E}(t,\vec{r}) = E\hat{x}\cos(ky - \omega t)$$

is incident on a hemispherical mirror of radius R with a perfectly reflecting outer surface, placed as shown.

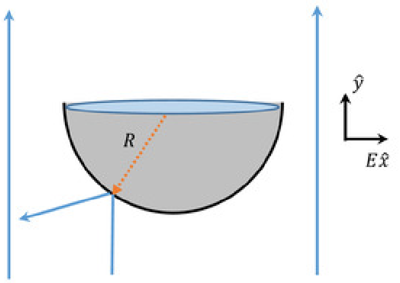
What is the electromagnetic force acting on the mirror averaged over one time-period of the wave?

(a) $\frac{\pi\epsilon_0 E^2 R^2}{2}$

(b) $\frac{2\pi\epsilon_0 E^2 R^2}{3}$

(c) $\pi\epsilon_0 E^2 R^2$

(d) $\frac{4\pi\epsilon_0 E^2 R^2}{3}$



Electronics

Q19. [TIFR_2026_A_Q12]

Year 2026 · Electronics · Basic Electronics · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Electrons in a metal are accelerated under a constant electric field $\vec{E}$ and experience a drag $-\eta\vec{v}$ due to the surrounding medium. If the density of electrons is n and the current is constant, what is the conductivity σ of the metal?

(a) $\sigma = \frac{ne^2}{\eta}$

(b) $\sigma = \frac{ne^2 E}{\eta}$

(c) $\sigma = \frac{ne^2}{m\eta}$

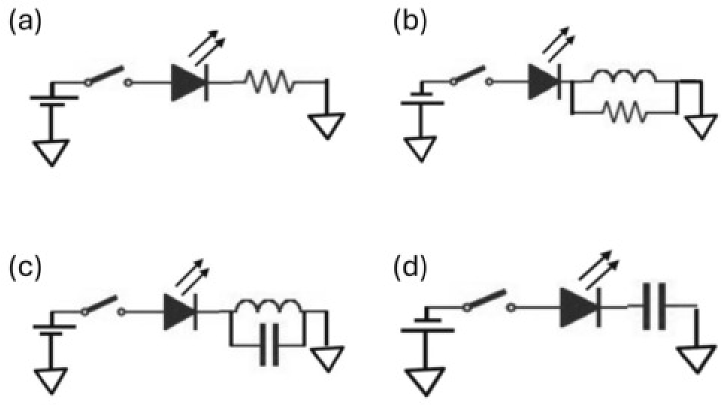
(d) $\sigma = \frac{neE}{m\eta}$

Q20. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q16]**

Year 2026 · Electronics · Diodes · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Which of these circuits made with resistor, capacitor and inductor will be the best to get light out of the LED using a 9 V battery, after the switch is closed?

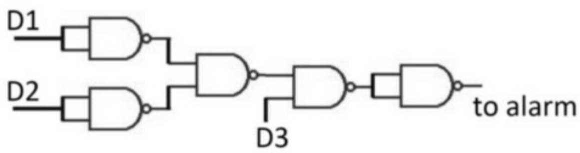


Q21. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q8]**

Year 2026 · Electronics · Logic Gates · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Three nearby laboratory rooms 1, 2, 3 have one smoke detector each labelled **D1, D2, D3** respectively, for fire safety. In case smoke is detected, the detector output goes to a logic state True. However, to prevent false alarm, these outputs are connected to the logic circuit below whose output activates a single alarm.



In which of the following cases will the alarm definitely ring:

(a) Smoke is detected in rooms 2 and 3

(b) Smoke is detected in rooms 1 and 2

(c) Smoke is detected in rooms 1 or 2

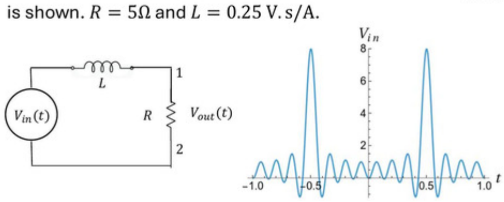
(d) Smoke is detected in any two of three rooms

Q22. [TIFR_2026_B_Q15]

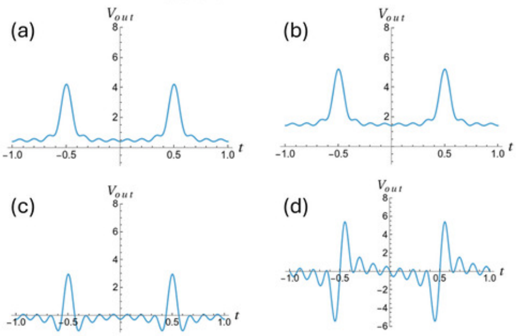
Year 2026 · Electronics · AC and DC Circuits · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

The figure below shows a circuit. The input waveform $V_{\text{in}}(t)$ is shown. $R = 5\Omega$ and $L = 0.25\ \text{V.s/A}$.



An ideal oscilloscope is connected between points 1 and 2, and shows a signal $V_{\text{out}}(t)$. What is the closest representation of $V_{\text{out}}(t)$?



Q23. [TIFR_2026_C_Q14]

Year 2026 · Electronics · Mixed · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

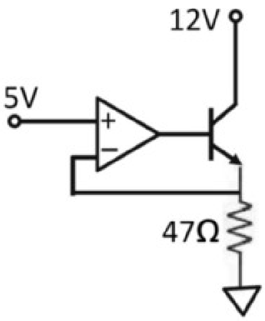
Op-Amps normally cannot output very high currents, which is typically limited to tens of mA . To overcome this, a transistor is used to boost the current output onto a load resistor. The circuit below uses a Si transistor with common-emitter mode current gain $\beta = 120$. What is approximately the current being drawn from the output of the Op-Amp here?

(a) 0.88 mA

(b) 0.76 mA

(c) 1.23 mA

(d) 2.11 mA



Experimental Physics

Q24. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q13]**

Year 2026 · Experimental Physics · Instruments · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

(Note: Either (a) or (b) can be correct, depending on the applications; both (a) or (b) will be given full marks.)

A thermistor measures the temperature by measuring the change of electric resistivity of a material. Which of the following types of materials are most suited for making thermistors to work in the temperature range -100 degree C to 300 degree C ?

(a) Semiconductors

(b) Metals

(c) Superconductors

(d) Gas of atoms

Q25. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q3]**

Year 2026 · Experimental Physics · Error Analysis · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

A student performs an experiment to measure the acceleration due to gravity, g, using a simple pendulum. The student measures $L = 1.00 \pm 0.01$ m and the time for 50 oscillations $t_{50} = 100.0 \pm 1.0$ s. Based on this experiment, what is the calculated value of g and its uncertainty, assuming that the errors on the length and time are statistically independent?

(a) $9.87 \pm 0.22\ \mathrm{m/s^2}$

(b) $9.87 \pm 0.11\ \mathrm{m/s^2}$

(c) $9.87 \pm 0.44\ \mathrm{m/s^2}$

(d) $9.87 \pm 0.05\ \mathrm{m/s^2}$

Mathematical Physics

Q26. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q10]**

Year 2026 · Mathematical Physics · Probability · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Scientists are conducting an underground experiment where two interactions, A and B can occur. In general, interaction A is twice as likely to occur compared to interaction B. Interaction A would give a signal in the detector with probability $1/8$, while interaction B would give a signal with probability $1/2$. If the detector registers a signal, what is the probability that the signal was due to interaction A ?

(a) $\frac{1}{3}$

(b) $\frac{1}{5}$

(c) $\frac{1}{9}$

(d) $\frac{2}{3}$

Q27. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q20]**

Year 2026 · Mathematical Physics · Limits, Continuity and Differentiation · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Consider the series:

$$S = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^{3/2}}$$

Which of the following statements is correct?

(a) S is convergent and is greater than 2

(b) S is convergent and is less than 2

(c) S is convergent and is equal to 2

(d) S is not convergent

Q28. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q25]**

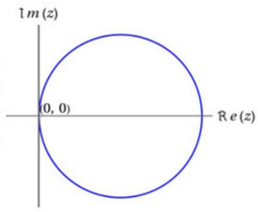
Year 2026 · Mathematical Physics · Complex Analysis · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

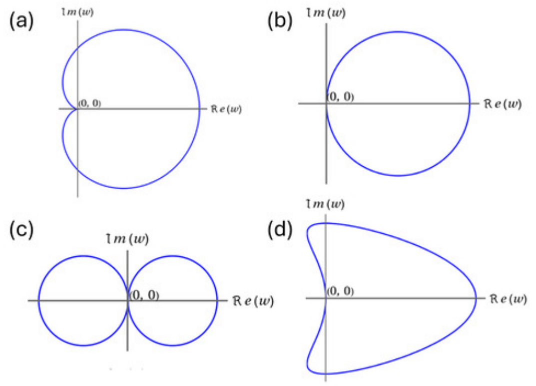
TIFR GS	2026	Section A

An analytic transformation:

$$w = z^2$$

is applied on the complex plane. Consider the circle C in z as shown on the right. Which of the following represents the image of C in the w plane?





Q29. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q4]**

Year 2026 · Mathematical Physics · Matrices · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Consider a 2×2 matrix defined as:

$$A = [a_0 + i\vec{\sigma} \cdot \vec{a}][a_0 - i\vec{\sigma} \cdot \vec{a}]^{-1}$$

where a_0 is a non-zero real number, $\vec{a}$ is a three-dimensional non-zero real vector, and $\vec{\sigma} = (\sigma_x, \sigma_y, \sigma_z)$, where $\sigma_x, \sigma_y, \sigma_z$ are the Pauli spin matrices. The matrix A :

(a) Is Unitary but not Hermitian

(b) Is Hermitian but not Unitary

(c) Is Unitary and Hermitian

(d) Is neither Unitary nor Hermitian

Q30. [TIFR_2026_A_Q9]

Year 2026 · Mathematical Physics · Limits, Continuity and Differentiation · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Find:

$$\lim_{x \to +\infty} x \log\left(\frac{x+1}{x-1}\right)$$

(a) 2

(b) 1

(c) 0

(d) The limit does not exist

Q31. [TIFR_2026_B_Q10]

Year 2026 · Mathematical Physics · Differential Equations · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

The curve that solves $\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{2y^3 - x^3}{3xy^2}$ and passes through the point (1,0) is given by:

(a) $y^3 + x^3 - x^2 = 0$

(b) $2y^3 - x^3 + x = 0$

(c) $y^3 + x^3 - x^2 - y^2 = 0$

(d) $2y^3 - x^3 + x + y = 0$

Q32. [TIFR_2026_B_Q7]

Year 2026 · Mathematical Physics · Limits, Continuity and Differentiation · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

Consider the function:

$$f(x) = \frac{4x - 11x^3}{(x^2+1)^2}$$

In the domain $x \in [1,4]$. What is the difference between the maximum value of the function and its minimum value? (Select the closest answer.)

(a) 1.45

(b) 3.2

(c) 3.96

(d) 0.82

Q33. [TIFR_2026_C_Q10]

Year 2026 · Mathematical Physics · Delta, Gamma, Beta and Integrals · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

What is the value of the following integral:

$$\int_0^\infty dx \frac{\sin x}{x} \frac{1}{x^2+a^2}$$

(Assume $a > 0$.)

(a) $\frac{\pi}{2a^2}(1 - e^{-a})$

(b) $\frac{\pi}{2a^2}(1 + e^{-a})$

(c) $\frac{\pi \sinh a}{2a^2}$

(d) $\frac{\pi \sin a}{2a^2}$

Nuclear and Particle Physics

Q34. [TIFR_2026_B_Q12]

Year 2026 · Nuclear and Particle Physics · Radioactivity · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

Reactions in a closed container convert one molecule of A to one molecule of B at a rate Γ_1 and one molecule B to one molecule of C at a rate Γ_2. At time $t = 0$, there are N_0 number of A molecules and no B or C molecules in the container. At what time is the number of B molecules in the container the maximum?

(a) $\frac{\log(\Gamma_2/\Gamma_1)}{\Gamma_2 - \Gamma_1}$

(b) $\frac{\log(\Gamma_1/\Gamma_2)}{\Gamma_2 - \Gamma_1}$

(c) $\frac{\log(\Gamma_2)}{\Gamma_2} + \frac{\log(\Gamma_1)}{\Gamma_1}$

(d) $\frac{\log(\Gamma_2)}{\Gamma_2} - \frac{\log(\Gamma_1)}{\Gamma_1}$

Q35. [TIFR_2026_C_Q4]

Year 2026 · Nuclear and Particle Physics · Radioactivity · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

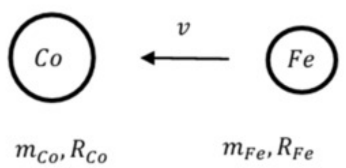
An $Fe(\mathrm{A} = 56, \mathrm{Z} = 26)$ nucleus starts from infinity with an initial speed v and moves head on towards a $Co(\mathrm{A} = 59, \mathrm{Z} = 27)$ nucleus which is initially stationary. The nuclei are uniformly charged spheres of radii $R = 1.2A^{1/3}\mathrm{fm}$, and a nuclear reaction can take place when they touch each other. What is the smallest v for which this reaction can occur? Neglect the mass difference between neutrons and protons and nuclear forces, and assume that the two nulceii remain spherical throughout the motion.

(a) 2.70×10^7 m/s

(b) $1.91 \times 10^7\ m/s$

(c) $1.37 \times 10^7\ m/s$

(d) 0.95×10^7 m/s



Optics

Q36. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q6]**

Year 2026 · Optics · Interference · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

A thin film of oil (refractive index, $n_{\text{oil}} = 1.40$) floats on a puddle of water (refractive index, $n_{\text{water}} = 1.33$) on a road. The film is illuminated at normal incidence from air by white light. In the light reflected vertically, green colour (with wavelength in air $\lambda_0 = 560\ \text{nm}$) is enhanced. The smallest possible thickness of the oil film is approximately:

(a) 100 nm

(b) 2000 nm

(c) 200 nm

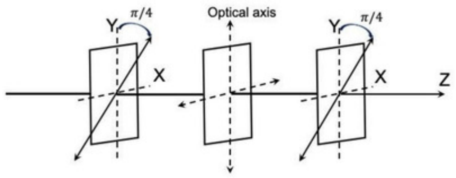
(d) 360 nm

Q37. **[TIFR_2026_B_Q9]**

Year 2026 · Optics · Polarization · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

In the experimental arrangement below, a plane polarised light of intensity I and wavelength 500 nm is propagating along the z-axis. It is polarised along the y-axis and is incident on the first polarizer which has the transmission axis at an angle of $\pi/4$ wrt the y-axis, as shown.



Subsequently, the beam passes through a flat birefringent crystal of thickness $950\mu m$ and optical axis along the y-axis. The crystal is kept normal to the z-axis. If the refractive indices of the crystal are $n_o = 1.514$ and $n_e = 1.519$, the beam intensity measured after the second polarizer whose transmission axis is parallel to that of the first one would be:

(a) 0

(b) $I/4$

(c) $I/2$

(d) I

Quantum Mechanics

Q38. [TIFR_2026_A_Q18]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · Basic Quantum Mechanics · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Hydrogen atom has a decay rate from $n = 2$ state to $n = 1$ state as about 6×10^8 decays per second. If the energy level expression for the hydrogen atom is

$$E_n = \frac{13.6}{n^2}\,\text{eV}$$

the uncertainty in the wavelength of this emission would be closest to

(a) 30 fm

(b) 0.1 fm

(c) 122 nm

(d) 19.4 nm

Q39. [TIFR_2026_A_Q19]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · Basic Quantum Mechanics · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

A quantum particle of mass m in three-dimensions is governed by the Hamiltonian:

$$\hat{H} = \frac{\hat{\vec{p}}^2}{2m} + \frac{1}{2}m\omega^2\left(x^2 + y^2 + z^2\right) + \lambda\left(x^6 + y^6\right)$$

with $\lambda > 0$. If $\psi_3(\vec{r})$ is the third excited state of the system, which of the following is correct?

(a) $|\psi_3(\vec{r})|^2 = |\psi_3(-\vec{r})|^2$

(b) $\psi_3(\vec{r})$ is an eigenstate of L^2

(c) $\psi_3(\vec{r})$ is an eigenstate of L_z

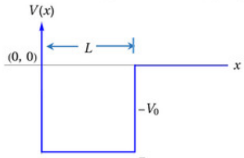
(d) $\psi_3(\vec{r})$ is an eigenstate of p_z

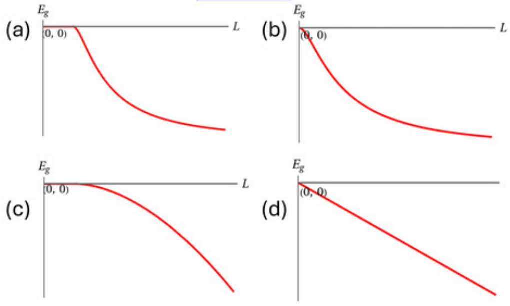
Q40. [TIFR_2026_A_Q22]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · Potential Well · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

Consider a quantum particle in a one-dimensional potential of the shape shown, with the well of width L, and $V(x<0) \to \infty$. The potential in the well is $-V_0$ and the potential for $x \in (L, \infty)$ is 0 . Which plot describes the change in the ground state energy (E_g) as L is changed keeping V_0 constant?





Q41. [TIFR_2026_B_Q13]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · WKB Approximation · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

Consider a quantum particle of mass m in one-dimension with a Hamiltonian:

$$\hat{H} = \frac{\hat{p}^2}{2m} + \lambda \hat{x}^8$$

with $\lambda > 0$. The ground state energy of the particle scales with λ as:

(a) $\propto \lambda^{1/5}$

(b) $\propto \lambda^{1/4}$

(c) $\propto \lambda^{1/3}$

(d) $\propto \lambda^{1/6}$

Q42. [TIFR_2026_B_Q14]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · Basic Quantum Mechanics · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

A one-dimensional quantum mechanical wave function is given by:

$$\psi(x) = Ne^{-|x-b|/a}$$

where $x \in (-\infty, \infty)$ and N is a normalization factor. What is the expectation value of the kinetic energy in this state?

(a) $\frac{\hbar^2}{2ma^2}$

(b) $\frac{2\hbar^2}{ma^2}$

(c) $\frac{\hbar^2}{2ma^2} + \frac{\hbar^2}{2mb^2}$

(d) $\frac{2\hbar^2}{mb^2}$

Q43. [TIFR_2026_C_Q1]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · Basic Quantum Mechanics · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

Consider a quantum particle moving in one spatial dimension with the Hamiltonian

$$\hat{H} = \frac{\hat{p}^2}{2m} + V(\hat{x})$$

Let $|\psi(t)\rangle$ be the state of the system where $|\psi(0)\rangle$ is a normalized eigenstate of this Hamiltonian. What is the value of $\langle\psi(t)|\hat{x}\hat{p}|\psi(t)\rangle$?

(Hint: Consider $\frac{d\langle\psi(t)|\hat{x}^2|\psi(t)\rangle}{dt}$.)

(a) $\frac{i\hbar}{2}$

(b) $-i\hbar$

(c) $\hbar$

(d) 0

Q44. [TIFR_2026_C_Q2]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · Angular Momentum and Hydrogen atom · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

In the standard $|S^2, S_z\rangle$ eigenbasis of a spin 1 particle, the matrix corresponding to the operator $\hat{S}_x^2 - \hat{S}_y^2$ is given by:

(a) $\hbar^2 \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$

(b) $\hbar^2 \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$

(c) $\hbar^2 \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$

(d) $\hbar^2 \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$

Q45. [TIFR_2026_C_Q3]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · Basic Quantum Mechanics · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

The Hamiltonian of a quantum system in the basis states, $|1\rangle$, $|2\rangle$, and $|3\rangle$ is given by the matrix:

$$\omega_0 \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \sqrt{2} & 0 \\ \sqrt{2} & 0 & \sqrt{2} \\ 0 & \sqrt{2} & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

If the system is in the state $|\psi(0)\rangle = (|1\rangle - |3\rangle)/\sqrt{2}$ at $t = 0$, the probability of the system to be in state $|2\rangle$ at time t is given by:

(a) 0

(b) $\sin^2(2\omega_0 t)$

(c) $\sin^2(\omega_0 t)$

(d) $\sin^2\left(\frac{\omega_0 t}{2}\right)$

Q46. [TIFR_2026_C_Q9]

Year 2026 · Quantum Mechanics · Basic Quantum Mechanics · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

The inner product of two complex functions $f(x), g(x)$, over the interval $x \in [0,1]$ is defined as:

$$\langle f \mid g \rangle = \int_0^1 dx x(1-x) f^*(x) g(x)$$

The adjoint, $\hat{O}^\dagger$, of a linear operator $\hat{O}$ is defined by the equation:

$$\langle f \mid \hat{O} g \rangle = \langle \hat{O}^\dagger f \mid g \rangle$$

What is the adjoint of the operator $\hat{O} = \frac{d}{dx}$? Assume that both $f(x)$ and $g(x)$ are differentiable.

(a) $\frac{2x-1}{x(1-x)} - \frac{d}{dx}$

(b) $-\frac{d}{dx}$

(c) $\frac{1}{x(1-x)} \frac{d}{dx}$

(d) $\frac{-1}{x(1-x)} \frac{d}{dx}$

Solid State Physics

Q47. [TIFR_2026_A_Q14]

Year 2026 · Solid State Physics · XRay Diffraction · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

An electron beam is accelerated over a potential V and strikes a crystal with lattice constant 5Å. What is the minimum V needed to resolve the crystal?

(a) 5 V

(b) 30 V

(c) 300 V

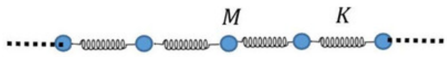
(d) 0.5 V

Q48. [TIFR_2026_C_Q15]

Year 2026 · Solid State Physics · Lattice Vibrations and Thermal Properties · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

Consider a one-dimensional lattice where each site has mass M and the lattice constant is a. Nearest neighbours are connected by springs of constant K. Which of the following best represents the dispersion of longitudinal oscillations in the lattice?



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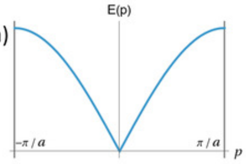

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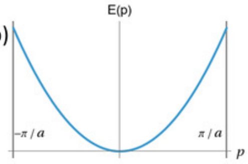

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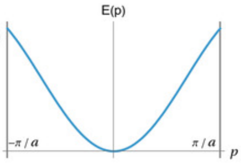

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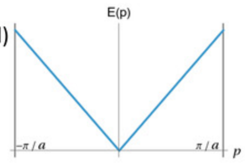

Statistical Mechanics

Q49. [TIFR_2026_B_Q5]

Year 2026 · Statistical Mechanics · Canonical Ensemble · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

Scientists have discovered a new type of particle, which can occupy a quantum state with 0,1 or 2 particles. If a quantum state has energy ω, the average occupation of this state in a system at temperature T and chemical potential μ is given by

(a) $\dfrac{2+e^{\frac{(\omega-\mu)}{T}}}{1+e^{\frac{(\omega-\mu)}{T}}+e^{\frac{2(\omega-\mu)}{T}}}$

(b) $\dfrac{2}{1+e^{\frac{(\omega-\mu)}{T}}+e^{\frac{2(\omega-\mu)}{T}}}$

(c) $\dfrac{1+2e^{\frac{(\omega-\mu)}{T}}}{1+e^{\frac{(\omega-\mu)}{T}}+e^{\frac{2(\omega-\mu)}{T}}}$

(d) $\dfrac{1}{1+e^{\frac{(\omega-\mu)}{T}}+e^{\frac{2(\omega-\mu)}{T}}}$

Q50. **[TIFR_2026_C_Q11]**
Year 2026 · Statistical Mechanics · Canonical Ensemble · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

Consider a single particle in a potential well with an energy spectrum $E_n = n\epsilon$, for $n = 0,1,2,3,..$, with $\epsilon > 0$. The n^{th} energy level has a degeneracy $g(n) = 2n + 1$. This system is at temperature T. What is the value of $\langle \hat{H} \rangle$? (k is the Boltzmann constant.)

(a) $\epsilon \frac{3e^{\frac{\epsilon}{kT}}+1}{\left(e^{\frac{2\epsilon}{kT}}-1\right)}$

(b) $\epsilon \frac{1}{\left(e^{\frac{\epsilon}{kT}}-1\right)}$

(c) $\epsilon \frac{3e^{\frac{\epsilon}{kT}}+1}{\left(e^{\frac{\epsilon}{kT}}-1\right)^2}$

(d) $\epsilon \frac{1}{\left(e^{\frac{\epsilon}{kT}}-1\right)^2}$

Q51. **[TIFR_2026_C_Q12]**
Year 2026 · Statistical Mechanics · Microcanonical Ensemble · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

A system of N classical non-interacting particles of mass m is confined to a cubic box of volume V. Inside the box is a region of volume $V_0 (< V)$, where a constant potential U is present.

If P is the pressure of the system, T is its temperature, then:

(a) $\frac{P}{Nk_BT} = \frac{1}{V - V_0\left(1 - e^{-U/k_BT}\right)}$

(b) $\frac{P}{Nk_BT} = \frac{1}{V - V_0 e^{-U/k_BT}}$

(c) $\frac{P}{Nk_BT} = \frac{1}{V_0 e^{-U/k_BT}}$

(d) $\frac{P}{Nk_BT} = \frac{1}{V - V_0}$

Q52. **[TIFR_2026_C_Q13]**

Year 2026 · Statistical Mechanics · Quantum Stat. Mech. · Only PhD · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section C

A Bosonic excitation has a density of states given by:

$$\rho(E) = \rho_0 \left[1 - \left(\frac{E}{E_0} - 1\right)^2\right]$$

for $0 \le E \le 2E_0$, and 0 otherwise. If the two-dimensional system is in a temperature range $k_B T \gg E_0$, the variation of the specific heat with temperature is given by:

(a) $C_V \propto T^0$

(b) $C_V \propto T^3$

(c) $C_V \propto T^2$

(d) $C_V \propto T$

Thermodynamics

Q53. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q11]**

Year 2026 · Thermodynamics · Laws of thermodynamics · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

The equation of state of a gas is given by:

$$\left(p + \frac{a}{v^2}\right)(v - b) = RT$$

where v is the volume per mole and R, a, b are constants. The internal energy per mole of the gas is given by:

$$U(T, v) = \frac{3}{2}RT - \frac{a}{v}$$

Which of the following gives the adiabatic equation of state at fixed particle number for the gas?

(a) $(v - b)^2 T^3 = constant$

(b) $(v - b)^2 T^{-3} =$ constant

(c) $(v - b)^2 T^{\frac{3}{2}} =$ constant

(d) $(v - b)^2 T^{-\frac{3}{2}} =$ constant

Q54. **[TIFR_2026_A_Q23]**

Year 2026 · Thermodynamics · Kinetic Theory of Gases · Both int. phd and phd · 3 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section A

A non-interacting, classical gas is made up of N Nitrogen molecules. The specific heat at constant volume is C_v. $C_v/(Nk_BT)$ is given by:
(Ignore rotations about the axis of symmetry.)

(a) 3/2 for some very low T, 5/2 for temperatures around the room temperature, 7/2 for some high temperatures

(b) 7/2 for some very low T, 5/2 for temperatures around the room temperature, 3/2 for some high temperatures

(c) 3/2 for some very low T, 2 for temperatures around the room temperature, 5/2 for some high temperatures

(d) 3/2 for some very low T, 2 for temperatures around the room temperature, 3 for some high temperatures

Q55. **[TIFR_2026_B_Q6]**

Year 2026 · Thermodynamics · Carnot Cycle · Only int. Phd · 5 marks

TIFR GS	2026	Section B

A cycle for an ideal gas consists of the following three reversible processes:

i. Isothermal expansion at T_H from V_1 to V_2.

ii. Isochoric (constant volume) cooling from T_H to T_C.

iii. Adiabatic compression from T_C and V_2 back to the initial state (T_H, V_1).

If C_V is the constant volume heat capacity of the gas, the efficiency η of this cycle is:

(a) $\eta = 1 - \frac{C_V(T_H - T_C)}{RT_H \log(V_2/V_1)}$

(b) $\eta = 1 - \frac{T_C}{T_H}$

(c) $\eta = 1 - \frac{C_V(T_H - T_C)}{C_P T_H}$

(d) $\eta = 1 - \frac{C_V T_C}{RT_H \log(V_2/V_1)}$

Answer Key & Index

Complete TIFR GS Physics Paper · 2026 · 55 questions

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3	TIFR_2026_A_Q21	Classical Mechanics	Central Forces, Gravitation an	a	3
4	TIFR_2026_A_Q24	Classical Mechanics	Bulk Matter	a	3
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