

Old is not gold: On the return to the old pension scheme

The old pension scheme works as electoral strategy but is **imprudent fiscal policy**

With the freshly **minted** Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, **reiterating** that the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) will be **restored** by the newly elected Congress-led government, the State would now become the fourth to do so. It is no surprise that the **promise** of the return of OPS — it guarantees pension at 50% of the last **drawn** basic pay — **boosted** the **beleaguered** party as government employees and retirees form a significant portion of the hilly State's **electorate**. A **Lokniti-CSDS post-poll** survey supported the fact that awareness (74% of those surveyed) and support for the Congress's promise was high (70%), possibly **playing a role in** the party **pping** the BJP to **pole position** — there was a single percentage point difference between them. Government staffs **seem** to prefer the scheme as it allows them to **avert** their contribution of 10% of their basic pay and **dearness allowance** towards the employee pension funds, as **envisaged** in the National Pension Scheme (NPS) since **inception** in 2004. But, **concomitantly**, **reverting** to OPS will **tax** the State's **exchequer**. Data show that pension payments form nearly 25.6% of States' own tax revenue — 80% for Himachal — but fall to close to a still **substantial** 12% of the total revenue receipts of States. Along with wages and salaries of government staff, the burden is set to be quite high.

States reverting to OPS can achieve some short-term gains as they need not **put up** the **matching contribution** of 10% towards employee pension funds. But with a **greying population**, the **burden** of payments **will** fall on future generations. An argument can be made for enhancing State revenues by further taxation to fund the scheme. The **NPS**, that has been **in place** and which allows employees to contribute to their pension **corpus** from their salaries with matching contribution from the government, **is** more **robust** as this corpus is invested through Pension Fund Managers and **eases** the State's burden. The NPS has built a substantial corpus and subscriber base over time. The Congress-led UPA government had **indeed** taken forward the pension **reforms** by the previous **NDA regime** and this is how the NPS has become relevant over the years. Breaking a **consensus** on pension reforms and reverting to OPS **amounts to** an imprudent option as it will only benefit organised government sector employees, increase the **fiscal** burden of carrying these payments and take up a significant portion of the State's budget, **thereby curtailing** its **outlays** on general welfare as a whole. This **holds good** even if it allows for short-term electoral **dividends** and **caters to** those who form the **backbone** of the government **machinery**. **[Practice Exercise]**

- **Ease** (verb) – lessen, reduce, alleviate कम करना
- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

Vocabulary

1. **Imprudent** (adjective) – not showing care for the consequences of an action; careless, irresponsible अविवेकपूर्ण
2. **Fiscal policy** (noun) – fiscal policy is the use of government revenue collection (taxes or tax cuts) and expenditure to influence a country's economy.
3. **Mint** (verb) – recently produced or made
4. **Reiterate** (verb) – repeat, restate, iterate, echo दोहराना
5. **Drawn** (adjective) – Withdrawn, extracted, take out निकाली हुई
6. **Boost** (verb) – increase, promote, enhance, encourage, advance बढ़ावा देना
7. **Beleaguered** (adjective) – in a very difficult situation; Stressed, longsuffering संकटग्रस्त
8. **Electorate** (noun) – Voter मतदाता
9. **Lokniti-CSDS survey** (noun) – The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) is an Indian research institute for the social sciences and humanities. It was founded in 1963 by Rajni Kothari and is largely funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research Govt of India.
10. **Post-poll** (adjective) – after election चुनाव के बाद
11. **Play a role in** (phrase) – contribute to, be instrumental in, be a factor in में भूमिका निभाना
12. **Pip** (verb) – defeat by a small margin or at the last moment हराना, परास्त करना
13. **Pole position** (noun) – a leading or dominant position.
14. **Seem** (verb) – appear, look, sound, feel, appear to be प्रतीत होना
15. **Avert** (verb) – prevent, avoid, ward off, stave off, deflect रोक देना, बचा लेना
16. **Dearness allowance** (noun) – paid by the government to its employees as well as a pensioner to offset the impact of inflation महंगाई भत्ता
17. **Envisage** (verb) – imagine, contemplate, visualize, envision, predict परिकल्पना करना
18. **Inception** (noun) – beginning, start, launch, initiation आरंभ
19. **Concomitantly** (adverb) – at the same time; simultaneously. साथ ही
20. **Revert** (verb) – return, relapse, take a step back regress लौटना
21. **Tax** (verb) – Overload, burden, weigh down, strain बोझ लादना

22. **Exchequer** (noun) – funds, coffers, resources, money, finances सरकारी खजाना
23. **Substantial** (adjective) – sizeable, considerable, significant, large, ample काफी / पर्याप्त
24. **Put up** (phrasal verb) – provide, supply, furnish, give, come up with, contribute देना(योगदान)
25. **Matching contribution** (noun) – a type of contribution that an employer chooses to make to their employees' employer-sponsored retirement plan; money that the employer adds to retirement savings account
26. **Greying population** (noun) – a greying society or country is one in which the number of older people is increasing because people are living longer.
27. **In place** (phrase) – established स्थापित
28. **Corpus** (noun) – Corpus is described as the total money invested in a particular scheme by all investors. कोष
29. **Robust** (adjective) – strong, vigorous, sturdy, tough, powerful मज़बूत
30. **Indeed** (adverb) – as expected, to be sure, in fact, in point of fact वास्तव में
31. **Reform** (noun) – improvement, betterment, amelioration सुधार
32. **NDA** (noun) – an alliance of political parties led by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
33. **Regime** (noun) – government, administration शासन
34. **Consensus** (noun) – agreement, accord, unity, concurrence, unanimity सर्वसम्मति
35. **Amount to** (phrasal verb) – be equivalent to के बराबर होना
36. **Fiscal** (adjective) – Financial वित्तीय
37. **Thereby** (adverb) – thus, therefore, in this way, consequently, hence जिसके चलते
38. **Curtail** (verb) – reduce, cut, cut down, cut back, decrease, lessen, diminish कम करना
39. **Outlay** (noun) – expenditure, spending, expense, cost, disbursement व्यय / खर्च
40. **Hold good** (phrase) – seem to be true; remain true or valid. सच प्रतीत होता है।
41. **Dividend** (noun) – benefit
42. **Cater** (to) (verb) – to provide what somebody/something needs or wants आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति करना
43. **Backbone** (noun) – the most important part of something सबसे महत्वपूर्ण अंश
44. **Machinery** (noun) – mechanism, apparatus, system, structure, arrangement तंत्र

Practice Exercise: Banking pattern

Direction (Q1 – Q3): Select the best express synonym of the given words [Editorial page]

- The old pension scheme works as electoral strategy but is imprudent fiscal policy
 - Deference
 - Impotent
 - Effusion
 - Foolish
- The promise of the return of OPS boosted the beleaguered party as government employees and retirees form a significant portion of the hilly State's electorate.
 - Edify
 - Stressed
 - Ambiguous
 - Evanescent
- Breaking a consensus on pension reforms and reverting to OPS amounts to an imprudent option
 - Monolithic
 - Pervade
 - Agreement
 - Sycophant
- Idioms & Phrase**

They need to put their own economic house in order.

 - Make necessary reforms
 - To fail to include something or someone
 - You would be more successful if
 - To be under suspicion, in trouble
- Direction: Five statements are given below, which are jumbled in any random order. These statements will form a coherent and meaningful paragraph, when arranged in the correct sequence. Arrange the sentences in the right order and answer the questions that follow.**

P. A conference in Israel of the top diplomats from the U.S. and four Arab countries would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

Q. But on Monday, in Israel's Negev desert, officials from the U.S., the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, Egypt and Israel gathered to discuss security partnerships, Iran and other issues, signalling a decisive shift in West Asian geopolitics.

R. Now, Arab-Israeli relations have gained a new dimension, with Mr. Bennet reportedly proposing a "Middle East defensive envelope" featuring Israel's advanced missile defence systems.

S. The Abraham Accords signalled that Israel's continuing occupation of the Palestinian territories was no longer an Arab-Israel problem.

T. Ahead of the summit, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett went to Egypt to meet President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed.

U. The UAE and Israel, which normalised relations as part of the Abraham Accords in 2020, have stepped up their economic and security cooperation ever since.

Which among the following will be the **Last** sentence of the paragraph after the rearrangement?

- A. S B. P C.T D.Q E.R

Direction (Q6 – Q9): Read the given sentences to find out whether there is any grammatical error in them

6. I requested my friend (A)/ to come (B)/ and shopping (C)/ with me. (D)/ No Error(E)
7. The passage is (A)/ more difficult (B)/ that I am unable (C)/ to comprehend it. (D)/ No Error(E)
8. Janet is determined (A)/ to be success (B)/ in whatever field (C)/ she chooses. (D)/ No Error. (E)
9. My friend lives (A)/ at a beautiful house (B)/ not more than (C)/ five miles from the beach. (D)/ No Error. (E)
10. **Find out the misspelt word**
 - A. Conscientious
 - B. Acreage
 - C. Buoyant
 - D. Supercede

Direction: Read the passage given below and answer the following questions.

In 2021, Dmitry Muratov, editor-in-chief of the Russian Novaya Gazeta, one of the few independent newspapers in Vladimir Putin’s Russia, was a co-winner of the Prize for his “efforts to safeguard freedom of expression”. **(1)/** This is the second year in a row that Russians who demand accountability and respect for human rights from authorities have been chosen for the Prize. **(2)/** By choosing a Belarusian human rights campaigner and two civil liberty-focused organisations from Ukraine and Russia for this year’s Nobel Prize for Peace, the Norwegian Committee has once again offered its redoubtable support for voices that are critical of the authoritarianism and militarism of Moscow and its allies. **(3)/** This year, Memorial, an organisation that has been documenting alleged state abuses in Russia since 1987, shared the Prize with Ales Bialiatski, the Belarusian activist, and the Center for Civil Liberties (CCL) in Ukraine. **(4)/** Memorial is one of the few independent NGOs in Russia that continue to demand **accountability (A)** from the country’s rulers. It has a database of both the victims and **abuses (B)** of state **perpetrators (C)** that date back to the Stalin **era (D)**. Mr. Bialiatski, who is the founder of the rights group called Viasna (Spring), has been campaigning for democracy in Belarus since the 1980s. The CCL, which was founded to promote democracy in Ukraine, is known for documenting Russia’s alleged war crimes in Ukraine.

Of the three recipients, Mr. Bialiatski and Memorial continue to face the wrath of the state. Mr. Bialiatski was jailed from 2011 to 2014 by the regime of Aleksandr Lukashenko. When street protests broke out across the country in 2020 after the disputed presidential election in which Mr. Lukashenko “won” a sixth term, authorities arrested Mr. Bialiatski again. He is currently in jail without trial. Memorial, founded in the **(A)/** Soviet Union’s internal reform **(B)/** period, has had several **(C)/** run-ins with the Putin administration. **(D)** Last year, the NGO was _____ **11** _____ by a Moscow court and last week, a judge ruled in favour of the seizure of the organisation’s office by the authorities. CCL, founded in 2007, rose to _____ **12** _____ in Ukraine’s 2014 pro-western Maidan protests that brought

down the pro-Russian government of Viktor Yanukovich. Since the February 24 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the CCL has been documenting Russia's alleged ____13____. The Peace Prize has often been criticised as a political award shorn ____14____ credibility, but it could strengthen the voices of peace and human rights globally.

Fill in the blank with the most appropriate word given in the option (From Q11 – Q14)

11. Last year, the NGO was _____ by a Moscow court and last week, a judge ruled in favour of the seizure of the organisation's office by the authorities.
 - A. Consummate
 - B. Contrived
 - C. Preeminent
 - D. Disbanded
12. CCL, founded in 2007, rose to _____ in Ukraine's 2014 pro-western Maidan protests that brought down the pro-Russian government of Viktor Yanukovich.
 - A. Chasm
 - B. Illicit
 - C. Prominence
 - D. Rudimentary
13. Since the February 24 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the CCL has been documenting Russia's alleged _____.
 - A. Aloof
 - B. Atrocities
 - C. Ostentatious
 - D. Loquacious
14. The Peace Prize has often been criticised as a political award shorn _____ credibility, but it could strengthen the voices of peace and human rights globally.
 - A. On
 - B. Of
 - C. To
 - D. With
15. **The following sentence may or may not contain an error in one of its parts. Identify the part containing the error. If the sentence is correct, select 'No error' as your answers.**
Memorial, founded in the (A)/ Soviet Union's internal reform (B)/ period, has had several (C)/ run-ins with the Putin administration. (D)
 - A. (A)
 - B. (B)
 - C. (C)
 - D. (D)
 - E. No Error
16. **Rearrange the sentence to form a meaningful sentence.**
By choosing a Belarusian human rights campaigner and two civil liberty-focused organisations from Ukraine and Russia for this year's Nobel Prize for Peace, the Norwegian Committee has

once again offered its redoubtable support for voices that are critical of the authoritarianism and militarism of Moscow and its allies. This is the second year in a row that Russians who demand accountability and respect for human rights from authorities have been chosen for the Prize. In 2021, Dmitry Muratov, editor-in-chief of the Russian Novaya Gazeta, one of the few independent newspapers in Vladimir Putin's Russia, was a co-winner of the Prize for his "efforts to safeguard freedom of expression". This year, Memorial, an organisation that has been documenting alleged state abuses in Russia since 1987, shared the Prize with Ales Bialiatski, the Belarusian activist, and the Center for Civil Liberties (CCL) in Ukraine.

- A. 1243
- B. 3214
- C. 3241
- D. 2143
- E. 2134

17. Given below is a word, followed by three sentence that consist of that word. Identify the sentence (S) that best express (es) the meaning of the word. Choose option 5 'None of the above' if the word is not suitable in any of the sentence

PREPETRATORS

- (i) The **perpetrators** of the massacre must be brought to justice as war criminals.
 - (ii) The **perpetrators** of this heinous crime must be found and punished to the fullest extent of the law.
 - (iii) The perpetrators of racially motivated violence must be punished.
- A. Only (i)
 - B. Only (ii)
 - C. Only (iii)
 - D. (i), (ii)
 - E. (i), (ii), (iii)
 - F. All are correct

18. In the following question, a sentence is given with four words marked as (A), (B), (C), and (D). These words may or may not be placed in the correct order. Four options with different arrangements of these have been provided. Mark the option with the correct arrangement as the answer. If no rearrangement is required, mark option (5) as your answer.

Memorial is one of the few independent NGOs in Russia that continue to demand **accountability (A)** from the country's rulers. It has a database of both the victims and **abuses (B)** of state **perpetrators (C)** that date back to the Stalin **era (D)**.

- A. C – A
- B. A – D
- C. B – C
- D. D – C
- E. No arrangement

19. **Select the connector from the given options which can be used to form a single sentence from the two sentences given below, implying the same as expressed in the statement sentence.**

- (i) The monsoon is critical for one million farmers and their crops
 - (ii) Nearly half of the country's farmland lacks irrigation
- A. Unlike
 - B. Despite
 - C. Because
 - D. Unless
 - E. Like

20. **Fill the appropriate preposition in the given blanks**

All the candidates aspires _____ the post of commissioned officers.

- A. Of
- B. In
- C. With
- D. To

Answers

1. D 2. B 3. C 4. A 5. E 6. C 7. B 8. B 9. B 10. D 11. D
 12. C 13. B 14. B 15. E 16. B 17. E 18. C 19. C 20. D

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

4. **Keep one's house in order** (Phrase) – Make necessary reforms. आवश्यक सुधार करना

5. **PQTUSR**

A conference in Israel of the top diplomats from the U.S. and four Arab countries would have been unthinkable a few years ago. But on Monday, in Israel's Negev desert, officials from the U.S., the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, Egypt and Israel gathered to discuss security partnerships, Iran and other issues, signalling a decisive shift in West Asian geopolitics. Ahead of the summit, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett went to Egypt to meet President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. The UAE and Israel, which normalised relations as part of the Abraham Accords in 2020, have stepped up their economic and security cooperation ever since. The Abraham Accords signalled that Israel's continuing occupation of the Palestinian territories was no longer an Arab-Israel problem. Now, Arab-Israeli relations have gained a new dimension, with Mr. Bennet reportedly proposing a "Middle East defensive envelope" featuring Israel's advanced missile defence systems.

6. (C) 'shopping' के बदले 'shop' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि Part (B) में 'to come' एक Infinitive है और इसके बाद Conjunction 'and' से जुड़ा हुआ शब्द 'shopping' एक Gerund है जबकि इसे भी Infinitive ही होना चाहिए; जैसे-

- i. She likes swimming and playing.
- ii. She wants to sing and dance.[dance= to dance]

➤ 'shop' will be used instead of 'shopping' because in Part (B) 'to come' is an Infinitive and after this the word 'shopping' attached to the Conjunction 'and' is a Gerund while it is also Infinitive should be the same; like-

- i. She likes swimming and playing.
- ii. She wants to sing and dance.[dance= to dance]

7. (B) 'more' के बदले 'so' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि बनावट 'so that' पर आधारित है जिसमें 'so' वाला Clause में 'कारण' तथा 'that' वाला Clause में 'परिणाम' होता है; जैसे-

- i. The question is so difficult that I cannot answer it.

➤ 'so' will be used instead of 'more' because the construction is based on 'so that' in which 'so' is 'cause' in clause and 'that' is 'result' in clause; like-

- i. The question is so difficult that I cannot answer it.

8. (B) 'to be success' के बदले 'to succeed' या 'to be successful' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'determined' के बाद 'To-Infinitive' का प्रयोग होता है और यदि 'determined' के बाद 'to be' का प्रयोग हो तो 'to be' के बाद 'Adjective' का प्रयोग होता है; जैसे-

- i. She is determined to succeed here.

ii. She is determined to be successful here

या

iii. She is determined to get success here.

➤ 'to be success' will be replaced with 'to succeed' or 'to be successful' because 'to-infinitive' is used after 'determined' and if 'determined' is followed by 'to be successful' ' Adjective' is used after 'to be'; like-

- i. She is determined to succeed here.
- ii. She is determined to be successful here
- or
- iii. She is determined to get success here.

9. (B) 'at' के बदले 'in' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'live in a flat/a house/a village' का प्रयोग होता है।

➤ 'in' will be used instead of 'at' because 'live in a flat/a house/a village' is used.

10. **Supersede** (verb) – take the place of (a person or thing previously in authority or use); supplant. अधिक्रमण करना

11. **Disband** (verb) – disperse, dissolve, scatter, break up, demobilize भंग करना

12. **Prominence** (noun) – Fame, importance, distinction, reputation, status प्रमुखता

13. **Atrocity** (noun) – outrage, barbarity, enormity, inhumanity, evil अत्याचार

14. **Shorn of** (adjective) – Deprived of, stripped of, minus, less, lacking से दूर, से वंचित

15. No Error

16. (B) **3214**

By choosing a Belarusian human rights campaigner and two civil liberty-focused organisations from Ukraine and Russia for this year's Nobel Prize for Peace, the Norwegian Committee has once again offered its redoubtable support for voices that are critical of the authoritarianism and militarism of Moscow and its allies. This is the second year in a row that Russians who demand accountability and respect for human rights from authorities have been chosen for the Prize. In 2021, Dmitry Muratov, editor-in-chief of the Russian Novaya Gazeta, one of the few independent newspapers in Vladimir Putin's Russia, was a co-winner of the Prize for his "efforts to safeguard freedom of expression". This year, Memorial, an organisation that has been documenting alleged state abuses in Russia since 1987, shared the Prize with Ales Bialiatski, the Belarusian activist, and the Center for Civil Liberties (CCL) in Ukraine.

17. **Perpetrator** (noun) – culprit, offender, criminal, felon अपराधी

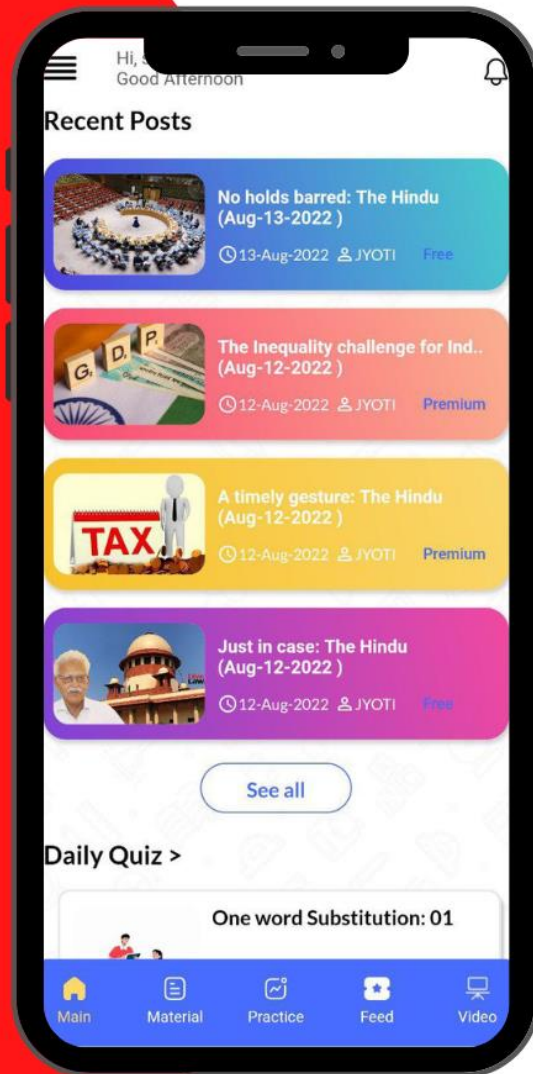
According to the given options all options are contextually correct.

18. Memorial is one of the few independent NGOs in Russia that continue to demand accountability from the country's rulers. It has a database of both the victims and perpetrators of state abuses that date back to the Stalin era.

19. The monsoon is critical for one million farmers and their crops **because** nearly half of the country's farmland lacks irrigation.

Explanation of other important words

Sr.NO	Words		Meanings	
Q1	Deference	noun	Submission to another's will; respect; courtesy	सम्मान, आदर
	Impotent	adjective	Powerless; helpless; unable to perform sexual intercourse.	नपुंसक, शक्तिहीन
	Effusion	noun	A pouring forth	बहाव, रिसाव
Q2	Edify	adjective	To enlighten; instruct, especially in moral or religious matter	उपदेश देना
	Ambiguous	adjective	Unclear in meaning; confusing; capable of being interpreted in different way.	अस्पष्ट
	Evanescent	adjective	Fleeting; vanishing; happening for only the briefest period	क्षण भंगुर, अस्थायी
Q3	Monolithic	adjective	Massive, solid, uniform and unyielding	अखंड
	Pervade	verb	To spread throughout	व्याप्त होना
	Sycophant	noun	One who sucks up to other	चापलूस
Q11	Consummate	adjective	Perfect; complete; supremacy & skillful	परिपूर्ण, पूर्ण करना
	contrived	adjective	Artificial; labored	काल्पनिक
	Preeminent	adjective	Better than anyone else; outstanding; supreme	उत्तम
Q12	Chasm	noun	A deep, gaping hole; a gorge	खाई, दरार
	Illicit	adjective	Illegal; not permitted	अवैध, अनुचित
	Rudimentary	adjective	Basic; crude; unreformed or undeveloped	मौलिक
Q13	Aloof	adjective	Uninvolved; standing off; keeping one's distance	अलग, दूर, पृथक
	Ostentatious	adjective	Excessively conspicuous; showing off	दिखावटी
	Loquacious	adjective	Talking a lot or too much	बातूनी



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