

## A concerning sequence: On a new coronavirus strain and a spurt in cases in China

India's vaccination strategy should **accommodate** for SARS-CoV-2 changes

The **spurt** in coronavirus cases reported out of China **has triggered** global **alarm**. India's Health Ministry has issued a **directive** to States to send positive samples to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) to check for new, concerning strains. The Health Minister, too, has **called for** a review meeting of the coronavirus situation in India. India's official numbers suggest that, **thus far**, there is little to worry. There are only 3,408 active cases. Only one district has a test positivity rate of over 10% and only four between 5 and 10%, as per the latest available weekly data. India's COVID-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 219.33 crore, and there are no signs of **distress** being reported out of hospitals. However, the **experience** of previous years **is** that it is usually many weeks after which a noticeable **spike**, **let alone** a wave, **is** confirmed by health authorities. There is **scarce monitoring** and mask **mandates** for public **gatherings**, airports and railway stations have been removed everywhere; so, low numbers do not necessarily mean new variants are not **taking root**.

In China, despite reports of **crowded mortuaries**, hospital admissions **piling up** and **stocked-out** pharmacies, weekly death counts are officially in the single digits. The **prevalent** opinion is that the **lifting** of **curbs**, after almost three years of some of the most **restrictive containment measures**, **has** now **exposed** a large **swathe** of people who lack 'natural **immunity**'. Some **mathematical modelling projections** calculate a million COVID-19 cases in the coming days in China. **Given** that much of the world has moved to **normalcy** in terms of travel, the concern is that this **surge** is likely to **reverberate** globally with many more infections, even in India, **inevitable**. There are two key lessons that can be **derived** from the Chinese experience: long lockdowns cannot **eliminate** the virus or prevent the development of new strains, and the only reasonable **defence** possible against severe disease **is via** vaccines. China has largely depended on home-grown vaccines such as CoronaVac and Sinopharm vaccines that **rely on** the inactivated virus technology. Despite 90% of the population receiving a single dose, and half, a second dose, the numbers in China suggest that **waning** immunity is a **fait accompli**. The big lesson for India is to not only establish the prevalent coronavirus variants but also whether the **administered** vaccines continue to be **efficacious**. While **most** of the vaccines administered in India **are** Covishield, and thus of the spike protein, it may be time to accommodate for changes in the virus. The **sequencing** of strains by INSACOG **should** not remain an **academic** exercise.

- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

[Practice Exercise]

## Vocabulary

1. **Concerning** (adjective) – Worrying, Troubling, Disturbing, Bothering, Upsetting चिंताजनक
2. **Sequence** (noun) – the process of discovering the order in which nucleotides (= chemical substances) are combined within DNA
3. **Strain** (noun) – a particular type or quality: प्रकार
4. **Spurt** (noun) – Surge, Increase उछाल/तेजी
5. **Accommodate** (verb) – to consider and include something in a design or plan समायोजित करना
6. **Trigger** (verb) – Initiate, start, prompt, activate, cause, spark off, set off शुरू करना
7. **Alarm** (noun) – Fear, apprehension, terror, fright, panic, unease, anxiety भय, खलबली
8. **Directive** (noun) – Instruction, order, command, edict, decree, ordinance, ruling आदेश
9. **Call for** (phrasal verb) – demand, require, request, ask for, मांग करना
10. **Thus far** (phrase) – so far, until now, until then, up until now अब तक
11. **Distress** (noun) – hardship, adversity, tribulation, misfortune संकट, विपत्ति
12. **Spike** (noun) – a rapid increase उछाल
13. **Let alone** (phrase) – and certainly not की बात तो बिलकुल नहीं
14. **Scarce** (adjective) – Limited, inadequate, scant, insufficient, sparse, meagre अपर्याप्त
15. **Monitoring** (noun) – Checking, watching, observing, supervising, scrutinizing निगरानी
16. **Mandate** (noun) – an official order given to somebody to perform a particular task शासनादेश
17. **Gathering** (noun) – Meeting, assembly, congregation, get-together सभा, समारोह
18. **Take root** (phrasal verb) – become fixed or established. जड़ पकड़ना
19. **Crowded** (adjective) – be full of से भरा हुआ
20. **Mortuary** (noun) – a room or building in which dead bodies are kept, for hygienic storage or for examination, until burial or cremation. शवगृह
21. **Pile up** (phrasal verb) – increase in quantity. ढेर लगाना

22. **Stocked-out** (adjective) – (of goods) unavailable for immediate sale in a shop.  
अप्राप्य, अनुपलब्ध
23. **Prevalent** (adjective) – common, widespread, prevailing, rife, popular  
प्रचलित
24. **Lifting** (noun) – Revoking, Canceling, Rescinding, Repealing, Ending, Take back  
उठाना, हटाना
25. **Curb** (noun) – Restriction, limit, control, check  
रोक, प्रतिबंध
26. **Restrictive** (adjective) – exclusive, limiting, prohibitive, restricting, confining  
प्रतिबंधक
27. **Containment measures** (noun) – Steps put in place to contain the spread of viruses or bacteria  
रोकथाम के उपाय
28. **Expose** (verb) – reveal, uncover, lay bare  
खुलासा करना
29. **Swathe** (noun) – a large number of people, or a large amount of something  
बड़ी संख्या में (आबादी)
30. **Immunity** (noun) – Protection, resistance, resilience  
प्रतिरक्षा
31. **Mathematical modeling** (noun) – it refers to the process of creating a mathematical representation of a real-world scenario to make a prediction or provide insight.
32. **Projection** (noun) – estimate, forecast, prediction, calculation, prognosis,  
अनुमान
33. **Given** (preposition) – considering, taking into account, bearing in mind  
देखते हुए
34. **Normalcy** (noun) – the state of being normal  
सामान्य होने की स्थिति
35. **Surge** (noun) – Sudden rise  
उछाल
36. **Reverberate** (verb) – to be repeated several times as it comes off different surfaces  
गूँजना
37. **Inevitable** (adjective) – unavoidable, inescapable, bound to happen, sure to happen,  
अपरिहार्य
38. **Derive** (from) (verb) – Originate, stem, spring, arise, come from  
प्राप्त करना
39. **Eliminate** (verb) – remove, eradicate, wipe out, annihilate, delete  
हटाना, समाप्त करना
40. **Defence** (noun) – something that protects somebody/something from something, or that is used to fight against attack  
बचाव
41. **Via** (preposition) – Through  
के माध्यम से
42. **Rely** (on) (verb) – Depend, count on, bank on  
पर निर्भर होना

43. **Waning** (adjective) – declining, fading, disappearing गिरावट आई, घटता
44. **Fait accompli** (noun) – something that has already happened in the past and cannot be changed now जो पहले ही घटित हो चुका है तथा उसे बदला नहीं जा सकता
45. **Administer** (verb) – to give somebody something, especially medicine, vaccine किसी को कुछ देना, विशेषतः दवा
46. **Efficacious** (adjective) – (of things) producing the desired result फलदायक
47. **Sequencing** (noun) – the process of discovering the order in which nucleotides (= chemical substances) are combined within DNA
48. **Academic** (adjective) – connected with subjects of interest to the mind rather than technical or practical subjects

## Practice Exercise

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

1. The **spurt** in coronavirus cases reported out of China has triggered global alarm.
  - A. Putative
  - B. Surge
  - C. Chronic
  - D. Metamorphosis
2. There is **scarce** monitoring and mask mandates for public gatherings, airports and railway stations have been removed everywhere
  - A. Meagre
  - B. Complicity
  - C. Analogy
  - D. Covenant
3. The numbers in China suggest that **waning** immunity is a fait accompli.
  - A. Sacrilege
  - B. Debacle
  - C. Coup
  - D. Fading

4. **Idioms & Phrase**

We need to **take a long, hard look at** the way we control gun ownership.

- A. To return quickly to a normal condition after a difficult situation or event
  - B. To do nothing and hope that a problem will disappear
  - C. To rush or flow through something
  - D. To examine something very carefully in order to improve it in the future
5. **Direction: Two 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.**
- (i) German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock's (A)/ visit to India and talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar have set the stage for (B)/ a more updated bilateral relationship.(C)/
  - (ii) and the meeting was preceded by Germany's agreement (D)/ The two sides signed an agreement on mobility and migration (E)/ that boosts travel for students, researchers and investors and businesses, (F)/ to fund renewable energy projects worth a billion Euros.(G)
- A. ABC, EFDG
  - B. DGFE, BAC
  - C. BAC, FDEG
  - D. FDGE, CBA
  - E. None of the above

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

6. He is (A)/ better than any boy (B)/ in the class. (C)/ No error(D)

7. Govind ought (A)/ not to tell me (B)/ your secret, but he did. (C)/ No error(D)
8. The stranded passengers (A)/ have been demanding (B)/ a huge compensation from the airline company. (C)/ No error(D)
9. You can spare me (A)/ ten minutes of your valuable time, (B)/ isn't it? (C)/ No error(D)
10. **Find out the misspelt word**
  - A. Congratulate
  - B. Conscientious
  - C. Fluorescent
  - D. Acquaintance

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

**(Business Line: UPI push – NOV 15, 2022)**

Policymakers trying to transition India to a less-cash economy have been confounded by a peculiar phenomenon — currency in circulation growing right alongside rising digital adoption. **(1)**/ With the mushrooming of mobile wallets, QR-based apps and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), **(2)**/ the volume of digital transactions leapfrogged from 293 crore in March 2020 to 799 crore by March 2022, as per RBI data. **(3)**/ But CIC (currency in circulation) as a proportion of GDP has been rising too. **(4)**/ After hovering at 11-12 per cent until FY20, it hit 14 per cent in FY21 and remained at 13 per cent in FY22. CIC in developed economies tends to be in the single digits. But a recent study by SBI Ecowrap offers hope that digital payments may finally be reducing the need for hard cash, in some respects. For the first time, the Diwali week this year saw a dip in CIC as opposed to sharp spikes witnessed in the last 20 years.

The lower need for cash can mainly be \_\_\_\_\_(a)\_\_\_\_\_ to the widespread adoption of UPI. As SBI notes, should UPI manage to materially reduce the need for the public to deal in cash, this could usher in many advantages to the economy. UPI use **traceability(A)** bank account holders to hold larger balances in their savings accounts, providing banks with a low-cost source of funds and a higher **CASA cushion(B)** for lending. Substitution of **anonymous(C)** cash payments with digital ones also allows for greater **prompts(D)** of transactions for the taxman looking to widen the tax base. Should the demand for paper currency diminish, banks would save on the logistics costs involved in safely storing and transporting paper currency and regularly refilling their ATMs. But despite affluent consumers embracing them in a big way, digital payments are still far from \_\_\_\_\_(b)\_\_\_\_\_. In an interview this July, the NPCI chief pointed out that digital payment services like UPI were currently used by just a fifth of the population. Unless a third adopted it, cash in circulation would not see a \_\_\_\_\_(c)\_\_\_\_\_ reduction.

Policymakers may need to address two stumbling blocks to further the reach of digital payments. With options such as mobile wallets, payment apps and QR code readers available only on smartphones, feature phone users who make up roughly half of India's mobile subscriber base have been left behind. RBI is trying to remedy this with the launch of UPI123PAY for feature phones. But the launch needs to be accompanied by a widespread awareness campaign to educate users about the safe use of UPI and the convenience it brings. Digital payments are currently characterised by high

transaction failure rates. This requires users to be given access to more channels beyond the app providers themselves, to seek \_\_\_\_\_(D)\_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words**

11. The lower need for cash can mainly be \_\_\_\_\_ to the widespread adoption of UPI.

**Fill the most appropriate option in (a)**

- (i) Gone
- (ii) Traced
- (iii) Place
- (iv) Over
- (v) Down

A. Only (i)    B. Only (ii)    C. Only (v)    D. Both (ii) and (iv)    E. None of the above

12. But despite affluent consumers embracing them in a big way, digital payments are still far from \_\_\_\_\_(b)\_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill the most appropriate option in (b)**

- (i) Ubiquitous
- (ii) Omnipresent
- (iii) Overseas
- (iv) Peculiar

A. Only (i)    B. Only (ii)    C. Only (iii)    D. Both (ii) and (i)    E. None of the above

13. Unless a third adopted it, cash in circulation would not see a \_\_\_\_\_(c)\_\_\_\_\_ reduction.

**Fill the most appropriate option in (c)**

- (i) Durable
- (ii) Stable
- (iii) Concrete
- (iv) Specific

A. Only (i)    B. Only (ii)    C. Only (iii)    D. Both (i) and (ii)    E. None of the above

14. This requires users to be given access to more channels beyond the app providers themselves, to seek \_\_\_\_\_(d)\_\_\_\_\_.

**Fill the most appropriate option in (d)**

- (i) Commit
- (ii) Harmony
- (iii) Stance
- (iv) Redress

A. Only (i)    B. Only (iv)    C. Only (iii)    D. Both (iii) and (ii)    E. None of the above

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.**

But the launch needs to be accompanied for a **(A)**/ widespread awareness campaign to **(B)**/ educate users about the **(C)**/ safe use of UPI and the convenience it brings.**(D)**/

- A. (A)
- B. (B)
- C. (C)
- D. (D)
- E. No Error

16. **Rearrange the sentence to form a meaningful sentence.**

Policymakers trying to transition India to a less-cash economy have been confounded by a peculiar phenomenon — currency in circulation growing right alongside rising digital adoption. **(1)**/ With the mushrooming of mobile wallets, QR-based apps and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI),**(2)**/ the volume of digital transactions leapfrogged from 293 crore in March 2020 to 799 crore by March 2022, as per RBI data. **(3)**/ But CIC (currency in circulation) as a proportion of GDP has been rising too.**(4)**/

- A. 2341
- B. 1234
- C. 2134
- D. 2143
- E. 4321

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

**PHENOMENON**

- (i) Together they might suggest paths of reinterpretation of ageing as a social **phenomenon**.
- (ii) This also illustrates that segmental reductions should be investigated in context, not as an isolated **phenomenon**.
- (iii) New legislation still does not offer adequate **phenomenon** for many endangered species.

- A. Only (i)
- B. Only (ii)
- C. Only (iii)
- D. (i), (ii)
- E. (ii), (iii)

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.**

UPI use **traceability(A)** bank account holders to hold larger balances in their savings accounts, providing banks with a low-cost source of funds and a higher CASA **cushion(B)** for lending. Substitution of **anonymous(C)** cash payments with digital ones also allows for greater **prompts(D)** of transactions for the taxman looking to widen the tax base.

- A. A – D



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

19. In the following question, two statements and five connectors are given. Only one of the connectors from those given can be used to combine the given two statements into one sentence without changing the meaning. Choose that connector as your answer.

- (i) Almost all of the individuals that sprouted were snapped off trees
  - (ii) sprouts were recorded eventually for partially uprooted trees.
- A. Unlike
  - B. Although
  - C. Yet
  - D. Eventually
  - E. None of these

20. Fill the appropriate preposition in the given blanks

Air pollution is a menace \_\_\_\_\_ health

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

## Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]

## Explanations

- Spurt** (noun) – Surge, Increase उछाल/ तेजी
  - **Putative** (adjective) – Commonly accepted; supposed; reputed ख्यात, प्रतिष्ठित
  - **Chronic** (adjective) – Constant; lasting a long time; inveterate स्थिर, सतत, नित्य
  - **Metamorphosis** (noun) – A magical change in form; a striking or sudden change कायापलट
- Scarce** (adjective) – Limited, inadequate, scant, insufficient, sparse, meagre अपर्याप्त
  - **Complicity** (noun) – Participation in wrongdoing; the act of being an accomplice सहापराध, सहभागिता
  - **Analogy** (noun) – A comparison of one thing to another; similarity समानता
  - **Covenant** (noun) – Solemn agreement; a contract; a pledge प्रतिज्ञापत्र, अनुबंध करना
- Waning** (adjective) – declining, fading, disappearing गिरावट आई, घटता
  - **Sacrilege** (noun) – A violation of something sacred; blasphemy अपवित्रीकरण
  - **Debacle** (noun) – Violent Breakdown; sudden overthrow पराजय, शिकस्त
  - **Coup** (noun) – A brilliant victory or accomplishment; the violent overthrow of a government by a small internal group तख्तापलट
- Take a hard look at** (Phrase) – to examine something very carefully in order to improve it in the future ज़रा गौर से देखना
- ABC, EFDG**  
 German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock's visit to India and talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar have set the stage for a more updated bilateral relationship. The two sides signed an agreement on mobility and migration that boosts travel for students, researchers and investors and businesses, and the meeting was preceded by Germany's agreement to fund renewable energy projects worth a billion Euros.
- 'any boy' के बदले 'any other boy' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि यदि एक group के एक सदस्य की तुलना उसी group के अन्य सदस्यों से हो, तो Comparative Degree में 'any' के बाद 'other' का प्रयोग होता है; जैसे-

i. Patna is more populous than any other town in Bihar.

- 'any other boy' will be used instead of 'any boy' because if a member of a group is compared with other members of the same group, then 'other' is used after 'any' in the comparative degree; As-

i. Patna is more populous than any other town in Bihar.

7. 'to tell' के बदले 'to have told' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'ought to + V1' का प्रयोग present time के लिए होता है जबकि 'ought to + have + V3' का प्रयोग past time के लिए; जैसे-

- i. You ought to read this book.
- ii. You ought to have read this book.

➤ 'to have told' will be used instead of 'to tell' because 'ought to + V1' is used for present time while 'ought to + have + V3' is used for past time; As-

- i. You ought to read this book.
- ii. You ought to have read this book.

8. No error

9. 'isn't it' के बदले 'can't you' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि वाक्य का subject 'you' तथा verb 'can' है, और यदि वाक्य का subject कोई personal pronoun हो तो Question tag का subject भी वही personal pronoun होता है और जो सहायक क्रिया वाक्य के subject के साथ प्रयुक्त होती है वही सहायक क्रिया question tag में subject के साथ भी प्रयुक्त होती है; जैसे-

- i. I was late, wasn't I?
- ii. You can do it, can't you?

➤ 'can't you' will be used instead of 'isn't it' because the subject of the sentence is 'you' and the verb 'can', and if the subject of the sentence is a personal Pronoun then the subject of the question tag It is also the same personal pronoun and the auxiliary verb that is used with the subject of the sentence, the same auxiliary verb is also used with the subject in the question tag; like-

- i. I was late, wasn't I?
- ii. You can do it, can't you?

10. **Acquaintance** (noun) –familiarity, associate, friend, colleague, acquaintanceship जान-पहचान/परिचित

11. **Trace** (verb) – find, discover पता लगाना

12. **Ubiquitous** (adjective) – Ever-present, omnipresent, everywhere सर्वव्यापी

- **Overseas** (adjective) – In a foreign country विदेशी
- **Peculiar** (adjective) – strange, unusual, bizarre, weird, queer अजीबोगरीब

13. **Durable** (adjective) – stable, persistent, enduring स्थायी

- **Concrete** (adjective) – specific, distinct, particular, definite ठोस

14. **Redress** (noun) – reparation, compensation, reimbursement निवारण

- **Commit** (verb) – Obligate, pledge, promise, compel वादा करना
- **Harmony** (noun) – a state of peaceful existence and agreement सामंजस्य, सद्भाव
- **Stance** (noun) – attitude, stand, viewpoint, opinion, way of thinking रुख

15. 'for' के बदले 'by' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'accompany' के साथ Preposition 'by' का प्रयोग होता है; जैसे-

- a. The illness is often accompanied by nausea
- b. Depression is almost always accompanied by insomnia

16. (B) 1234

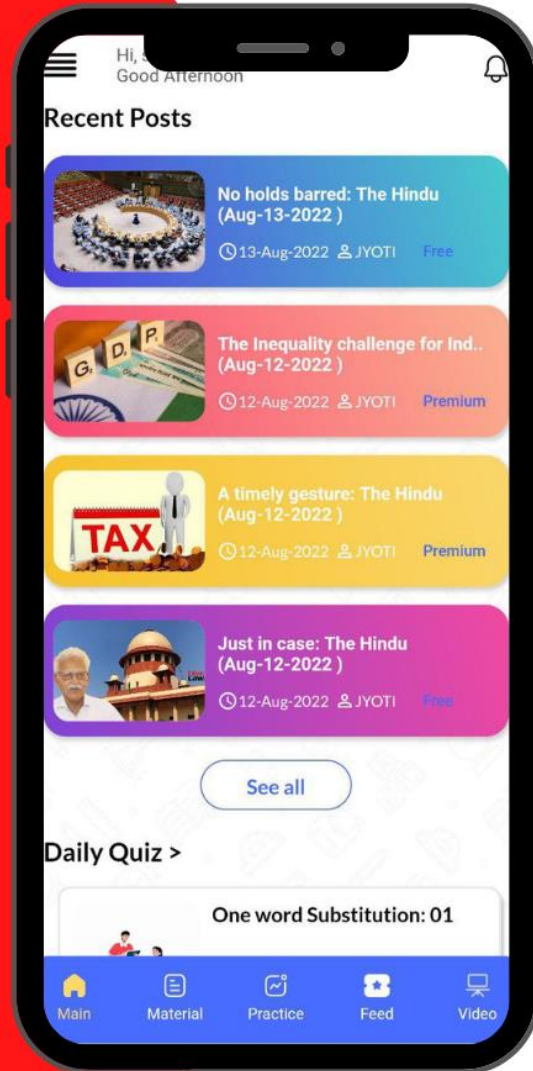
Policymakers trying to transition India to a less-cash economy have been confounded by a peculiar phenomenon — currency in circulation growing right alongside rising digital adoption. With the mushrooming of mobile wallets, QR-based apps and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), the volume of digital transactions leapfrogged from 293 crore in March 2020 to 799 crore by March 2022, as per RBI data. But CIC (currency in circulation) as a proportion of GDP has been rising too.

17. **Phenomenon** (noun) – Occurrence, fact, experience, happening, incident, event घटना

According to the given options only (i) AND (ii) are contextually correct.

Because the (iii) sentence is not giving any meaning and correct sentences should be like New legislation still does not offer adequate protection for many endangered species.

18. UPI use prompts bank account holders to hold larger balances in their savings accounts, providing banks with a low-cost source of funds and a higher CASA cushion for lending. Substitution of anonymous cash payments with digital ones also allows for greater traceability of transactions for the taxman looking to widen the tax base.
19. Almost all of the individuals that sprouted were snapped off trees, **although** sprouts were recorded eventually for partially uprooted trees.



# Learn Vocabulary Through Reading Articles

English Madhyam

