

Choosing the watchdog: On Election Commissioners appointment

The Supreme Court of India **verdict** on manner of choosing election panel **is** a boost to its independence

The Supreme Court of India **verdict taking away** the power to appoint members of the Election Commission of India (ECI) from the **sole domain** of the **executive is** a major boost to the independence of the election watchdog. The Court has **ruled** that **a three-member committee** comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, or the leader of the single largest Opposition party, and the Chief Justice of India (CJI), **will** choose the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (EC) until a law is passed. As a constitutional body **vested** with **plenary powers of superintendence**, direction and control over elections, the ECI is a **vital** component of the republic that requires functional freedom and constitutional protection to ensure free and fair elections. It has been the **practice** that the President appoints the CEC and ECs on the advice of the Prime Minister, but the **Constitution Bench** has **pointed out** that the original **intent** of the Constitution makers was that the manner of appointment should be **laid down** in a **parliamentary law**. Article 324 says the President should appoint the CEC and Commissioners, **subject to** any law made in that behalf by Parliament. However, **successive regimes** have failed to **enact** a law. **Justice K.M. Joseph**, who has **authored** the main verdict, **has** based the Court's decision on "the **inertia**" of the **legislature** and the **perceived vacuum** in the absence of a law.

Few would disagree with the Court's fundamental **proposition** that the election watchdog should be **fiercely** independent and not be **beholden** to the executive; and there should be no **room** for an appointing authority to expect **reciprocity** or **loyalty**. The government's **argument** that the **existing** system was working well and there was no vacuum **was** quite weak, as, **admittedly**, the **convention** now is that the Prime Minister chooses a name from among a database of high-ranking civil servants and advises the President to make the appointment. However, a relevant question is whether the presence of the CJI in the selection panel is the only way in which an institution's independence can be **preserved**. There is no clear proof that the **independence** of the Central Bureau of Investigation Director, who is appointed by a panel that includes the CJI, or his **nominee**, **has** been preserved or **enhanced**. Further, the CJI's presence may give **pre-emptive legitimacy** to all appointments and affect objective judicial **scrutiny** of any error or **infirmity** in the process. On its part, the government will be well-advised to enact a law — but not one that **seeks** to preserve the current convention to **get around** the verdict — that is **in tune with** the **spirit** of the Court's **emphasis** on the ECI's independence.

[Practice Exercise]

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

Vocabulary

1. **Watchdog** (noun) – Ombudsman, monitor, scrutineer, inspector, observer पर्यवेक्षक
2. **Verdict** (noun) – Decision, adjudication, decree, judgement फैसला
3. **Take away** (phrasal verb) – remove, withdraw, seize हटाना, छीनना
4. **Sole** (adjective) – only, exclusive, singular, solitary, individual एकमात्र
5. **Domain** (noun) – field, area, arena, sphere कार्यक्षेत्र
6. **Executive** (noun) – The executive branch of the government, including the president, the cabinet, and several departments, manages the duties of government and its laws. कार्यपालिका
7. **Rule** (verb) – decree, order, direct, pronounce, make a judgement फैसला/ निर्णय करना
8. **Vest** (with) (verb) – to grant power, rights, or ownership to someone. निहित होना
9. **Plenary power** (noun) – A plenary power or plenary authority is a complete and absolute power to take action on a particular issue, with no limitations. पूर्ण शक्ति
10. **Superintendence** (noun) – supervision, oversight, direction, management पर्यवेक्षण
11. **Vital** (adjective) – crucial, essential, necessary, important, imperative महत्वपूर्ण
12. **Practice** (noun) – Habit, custom, tradition, way, system, procedure, manner प्रथा
13. **Constitution bench** (noun) – Constitution bench is the name given to the benches of the Supreme Court of India which consist of at least five judges of the court which sit to decide any case “involving a substantial question of law as to the interpretation” of the Constitution of India
14. **Point out** (phrasal verb) – indicate, specify, detail, mention, refer to दिखाना
15. **Intent** (noun) – aim, purpose, intention, objective, target मंशा/ इरादा
16. **Lay down** (phrasal verb) – establish, formulate, prescribe, stipulate, set निर्धारित करना
17. **Parliamentary law** (noun) – the body of law which governs the conduct of the meeting of a legislative body.
18. **Subject** (to) (adjective) – depending on something as a condition (शर्त के रूप में) किसी बात पर निर्भर
19. **Successive** (adjective) – succeeding, in succession, following एक के बाद एक आने वाला

20. **Regime** (noun) – government, administration शासन
21. **Enact** (verb) – make law, pass, approve, ratify, validate, sanction क़ानून बनाना
22. **Author** (verb) – to create something or formally suggest it (फ़ैसला) लिखना
23. **Inertia** (noun) – Disinterest, inactivity, Unwillingness, lethargy जड़ता/निष्क्रियता
24. **Legislature** (noun) – The legislative body of a country or state विधायिका
25. **Perceived** (adjective) – apparent, professed, supposed, seeming कथित
26. **Vacuum** (noun) – a situation from which something is missing or lacking खालीपन
27. **Proposition** (noun) – proposal, suggestion, thesis, premise प्रस्ताव, कथन
28. **Fiercely** (adverb) – aggressively, intensely, passionately जमकर
29. **Beholden** (to) (adjective) – Obligated, duty-bound, in someone's debt के अधीन होना
30. **Room** (noun) – space, scope, opportunity गुंजाइश
31. **Reciprocity** (noun) – behaviour in which two people or groups of people give each other help and advantages आपस के संबंध का
32. **Loyalty** (noun) – devotion, allegiance, faithfulness, constancy निष्ठा
33. **Argument** (noun) – the reason(s) that you give to support your opinion about something तर्क, दलील, युक्ति
34. **Existing** (adjective) – current मौजूदा
35. **Admittedly** (adverb) – Certainly, undoubtedly, without a doubt, unquestionably स्वीकारते हुए भी
36. **Convention** (noun) – way, custom, usage, way, habit, norm परंपरा, प्रथा
37. **Preserved** (adjective) – Maintained, conserved, protected, upheld संरक्षित
38. **Nominee** (noun) – a person who has been officially suggested for a position उम्मेदवार
39. **Enhance** (verb) – improve, increase, strengthen, raise, boost बढ़ाना
40. **Pre-emptive** (adjective) – preventive, anticipatory, precautionary, prescient, preparatory अग्रिम
41. **Legitimacy** (noun) – validity, justification, soundness, well-foundedness वैधता
42. **Scrutiny** (noun) – Inspection, examination, enquiry जांच
43. **Infirmity** (noun) – lack of strength; Weakness, frailty, feebleness दुर्बलता/ कमजोरी

44. **Seek** (verb) – try, attempt, endeavour, strive, प्रयास करना
45. **Get around** (phrasal verb) – deal successfully with a problem; overcome, surmount, sort out बच निकलना
46. **In tune with** (phrase) – in accordance with के अनुरूप होना
47. **Spirit** (noun) – essence, nature, character, temperament आत्मा/ भावना
48. **Emphasis** (noun) – focus, stress, significance, importance प्रमुखता, ज़ोर

Practice Exercise

1. **What was the Supreme Court of India verdict regarding the appointment of Election Commissioners?**
 - A. The power to appoint Election Commissioners has been taken away from the executive
 - B. The President will continue to appoint Election Commissioners on the advice of the Prime Minister
 - C. The Chief Justice of India will have the sole authority to appoint Election Commissioners
 - D. The Election Commissioners will be elected by a public vote
2. **Who will be a part of the three-member committee to choose the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners until a law is passed?**
 - A. The Prime Minister, the President, and the Chief Justice of India
 - B. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India
 - C. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the single largest Opposition party, and the Chief Justice of India
 - D. The President, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India
3. **What is the main purpose of the Election Commission of India?**
 - A. To appoint the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners
 - B. To ensure free and fair elections
 - C. To advise the President on election matters
 - D. To conduct election campaigns for political parties
4. **What is the significance of the Supreme Court of India's recent verdict on the manner of choosing members of the Election Commission of India (ECI)?**
 - A. It increases the executive's power over the election watchdog.
 - B. It reinforces the convention that the Prime Minister selects high-ranking civil servants to advise the President.
 - C. It preserves the independence of the ECI by taking away the executive's sole power to appoint members and creating a selection committee.
 - D. It makes the CJI solely responsible for selecting the Chief Election Commissioner.
5. **What is a relevant question regarding the selection panel for Election Commissioners?**
 - A. Whether the presence of the CJI in the selection panel is the only way in which an institution's independence can be preserved
 - B. Whether the selection panel should include members of the opposition party
 - C. Whether the Prime Minister should have sole authority to appoint Election Commissioners
 - D. Whether the President should have the power to veto the selection panel's decision

Direction): Select the best express synonym of the given words

6. **Beholden**
 - A. Conspicuous
 - B. Concerned

- C. Deterioration
D. Obligated
7. **Reciprocity**
A. Fragility
B. Mutuality
C. Distrust
D. Footing
8. **Infirmity**
A. Weakness
B. Deficit
C. Room
D. Controversy
9. **Idioms & Phrase**
She ***touched a raw nerve*** when she mentioned that job he didn't get.
A. to succeed in doing something
B. to experience the bad result of something you have done
C. to upset someone by mention something
D. to punish someone for a past wrong or grievance
10. **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) the 14th Brics Leaders' Summit demonstrates(A)/ the Beijing Declaration issued at (B)/ the role India can play on the global stage(C)/
(ii) China and Russia should not have (D)/ any anti-Europe or anti-US reference in(E)/ that the outcome of a group that includes (F)/ any shape or form is to India's credit (G)/
A. ABC, EFDG
B. DGFE, BAC
C. BAC, FDEG
D. FDGE, CBA
E. None of the above
11. **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) Samples from the suspected patients have been taken and sent to China for confirmation.
(ii) There are no laboratories in Pakistan equipped to diagnose the pathogen
A. Unlike
B. Though
C. Yet
D. As
E. None of these

Direction: Read the given sentences to find out whether there is any grammatical error in them

12. Banks are on the verge (A)/ of facing a formidable challenge (B)/ of losing over fifty per cent of (C)/ their employees due to retirement. (D)/No Error. (E)
13. Not only has the commerce ministry fixed (A)/ extraordinarily minimum prices for onion exports (B)/ but it has also made licenses mandatory (C)/ for every consignment (D)/ Error. (E)
14. A study found that while weight loss (A)/ via surgery may improve knee pain in obese patients, (B)/ there may be permanent damage to the knee (C)/ from being severe overweight. (D)/ No Error. (E)
15. In order to streamline (A)/ the movement of vehicles during (B)/ the festival, traffic police have (C)/ chalked out diversion plans. (D)/ No Error. (E)
16. **Find out the misspelt word**
- A. Stationary
B. Ransack
C. Eventually
D. Convenience

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

(The Hindu Editorial: Not losing steam – Feb 14, 2023)

While activity was unchanged or moderated across all the three constituents of the Index of Industrial Production — mining, manufacturing and electricity — the largest sector manufacturing, with a weight of almost 78%, was the biggest **drag** as the expansion decelerated to 2.6%, from the preceding month's 6.4% increase. **(1)**/ Assessed on a sequential or month-on-month basis, mining and manufacturing posted slowdowns, with only electricity growing 7.6% in the wake of November's contraction of 1.5%.**(2)**/ Manufacturing, where the sequential growth slowed by more than 2 percentage points to 4.7%, from 6.9% in the previous month, was weighed down by three of the six use-based sectors including consumer durables, consumer non-durables and capital goods.**(3)**/The latest industrial output estimates from the National Statistical Office indicate an across-the-board loss of momentum in December with overall production growth slowing to 4.3% year-on-year, from November's 7.3% pace. **(4)**/ The three categories reflect a broader trend in the economy. For one, private consumption is still to regain an _____(a)_____ footing notwithstanding a post-pandemic surge in pent-up spending most visible in the services sector. Production of consumer durables _____(b)_____10.4% year-on-year and 2.2% sequentially in December, after rebounding in November following festival demand. Non durables experienced a sharp sequential _____(c)_____, with growth braking to 7.4% month-on-month. The capital goods data point to continuing uncertainty on the private sector investment front. Production of the plant and machinery ordered when expanding or starting _____(d)_____ is struggling to sustain momentum, with output growth sliding appreciably both sequentially and year-on-year. In December, growth from **(A)**/ a year earlier in **(B)**/ the segment slowed to 7.6% **(C)**/, compared to November's 21.6%.**(D)**/

Month-on-month, the **slowdown(A)** was starker with output **barely(B)** inching up 0.2%, after expanding 13% in November. However, primary and infrastructure and construction goods offer **hope(C)** that some positive **momentum(D)** can be built on with the right policy measures.

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

17. For one, private consumption is still to regain an ____ (a) _____ footing notwithstanding a post-pandemic surge in pent-up spending most visible in the services sector

Fill the most appropriate option in (a)

- (i) Substantial
- (ii) Enduring
- (iii) Critical
- (iv) Adverse

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

18. Production of consumer durables ____ (b) _____ 10.4% year-on-year and 2.2% sequentially in December, after rebounding in November following festival demand.

Fill the most appropriate option in (b)

- (i) Threaten
- (ii) Defend
- (iii) Fervour
- (iv) Shrank

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

19. Non durables experienced a sharp sequential ____ (c) _____, with growth braking to 7.4% month-on-month.

Fill the most appropriate option in (c)

- (i) Assurance
- (ii) Deceleration
- (iii) Elevation
- (iv) Conflict

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

20. Production of the plant and machinery ordered when expanding or starting ____ (d) _____ is struggling to sustain momentum, with output growth sliding appreciably both sequentially and year-on-year.

Fill the most appropriate option in (d)

- (i) Influence
- (ii) Adoption
- (iii) Ventures
- (iv) Optimism

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

21. **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.**

In December, growth from **(A)/** a year earlier in **(B)/** the segment slowed to 7.6% **(C)/**, compared to November's 21.6%.**(D)/**

A. (A)

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

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

While activity was unchanged or moderated across all the three constituents of the Index of Industrial Production — mining, manufacturing and electricity — the largest sector manufacturing, with a weight of almost 78%, was the biggest **drag** as the expansion decelerated to 2.6%, from the preceding month's 6.4% increase. **(1)**/ Assessed on a sequential or month-on-month basis, mining and manufacturing posted slowdowns, with only electricity growing 7.6% in the wake of November's contraction of 1.5%.**(2)**/ Manufacturing, where the sequential growth slowed by more than 2 percentage points to 4.7%, from 6.9% in the previous month, was weighed down by three of the six use-based sectors including consumer durables, consumer non-durables and capital goods.**(3)**/The latest industrial output estimates from the National Statistical Office indicate an across-the-board loss of momentum in December with overall production growth slowing to 4.3% year-on-year, from November's 7.3% pace. **(4)**/

- A. 2341
- B. 4123
- C. 2134
- D. 2143
- E. 4321

23. 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

DRAG

- (i) The company has struggled to find a **drag** in an industry suffering from overcapacity.
- (ii) Keeping a large staff is a **drag** on our income.
- (iii) High energy prices will continue to be a **drag** on the economy.

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

24. **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.**

Month-on-month, the **slowdown(A)** was starker with output **barely(B)** inching up 0.2%, after expanding 13% in November. However, primary and infrastructure and construction goods offer **hope(C)** that some positive **momentum(D)** can be built on with the right policy measures

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

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

I got scared _____ the sound of bomb blast.

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

Answers

1. A 2.C 3. B 4. C 5. A 6. D 7. B 8. A 9. C 10.C 11. D 12. C
13. B 14. D 15. E 16. A 17. B 18. C 19. B 20. C 21. D 22. B 23. E 24. E 25.A

Explanations

1. A. The power to appoint Election Commissioners has been taken away from the executive.
2. C. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the single largest Opposition party, and the Chief Justice of India.
3. B. To ensure free and fair elections.
4. C. It preserves the independence of the ECI by taking away the executive's sole power to appoint members and creating a selection committee.
5. A. Whether the presence of the CJI in the selection panel is the only way in which an institution's independence can be preserved.
6. **Beholden** (adjective) – Obligated, duty-bound, in someone's debt के अधीन होना
 - **Conspicuous** (adjective) – clear, visible, apparent, obvious स्पष्ट
 - **Concerned** (adjective) – worried, anxious, troubled, afraid, disturbed, alarmed, fretful चिंतित
 - **Deterioration** (noun) – decline, decay, degradation, worsening, degeneration गिरावट
7. **Reciprocity** (noun) – the quality of being reciprocal : mutual dependence, action, or influence; Mutuality पारस्परिकता
 - **Fragility** (noun) – delicacy, weakness, frailty, infirmity, debility कमजोरी/ नाजुकता
 - **Distrust** (noun) – Disbelief, suspicion, doubt, mistrust अविश्वास
 - **Footing** (noun) – basis, base, foundation, underpinning, support, आधार
8. **Infirmity** (noun) – lack of strength; Weakness, frailty, feebleness दुर्बलता/ कमजोरी
 - **Deficit** (noun) – shortage, deficiency, shortfall, lack, inadequacy घाटा, कमी, अभाव
 - **Room** (noun) – scope, capacity, margin, leeway गुंजाइश
 - **Controversy** (noun) – public discussion and disagreement about something विवाद
9. **Touch a raw nerve** (phrase) – to upset someone by mention something ऐसी बात का जिक्र करना जो किसी को परेशान करे।
10. **BAC, FDEG**
The Beijing Declaration issued at the 14th Brics Leaders' Summit demonstrates the role India can play on the global stage. That the outcome of a group that includes China and Russia should not have any anti-Europe or anti-US reference in any shape or form is to India's credit.
11. Samples from the suspected patients have been taken and sent to China for confirmation as there are no laboratories in Pakistan equipped to diagnose the pathogen. Among the given options 'as' is the correct choice since it used as a conjunction, joining two clauses.

12. (C) 'over' के बदले 'above' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'level' बताने के लिए 'above' (के उपर) का प्रयोग होता है।

- 'above' will be used instead of 'over' because 'above' (above) is used to indicate 'level'.

13. (B) 'prices' के बदले 'price' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'onion' एक वस्तु है और इसके लिए 'price' Singular होगा।

- 'price' will be used instead of 'prices' because 'onion' is a commodity and 'price' will be Singular for it.

14. (D) 'severe' के बदले 'severely' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'severe' एक Adjective है जिसका अर्थ है 'कड़ कठोर; असहनीय' किन्तु 'severely' एक Adverb जिसका अर्थ है 'कठोरता से'; 'निर्दयता से'; 'प्रचंडत से', और 'overweight' एक Adjective है जिस विशेषता Adverb बताएगा, न कि Adjective.

- 'severely' will be used instead of 'severe' because 'severe' is an Adjective which means 'hard; Unbearable' but 'severely' an Adverb meaning 'strictly'; 'mercilessly'; 'Too strong', and 'overweight' is an Adjective that the Adverb would attribute to, not an Adjective.

15. (E) No error.

16. **Stationary** (adjective) – motionless, still, fixed, stable, immobile स्थिर

17. **Enduring** (adjective) – lasting over a period of time; durable स्थायी

- **Substantial** (adjective) – sizeable, considerable, significant, large, ample काफी / पर्याप्त
- **Critical** (adjective) – crucial, vital, essential, of the essence, all-important महत्वपूर्ण
- **Adverse** (adjective) – Unfavorable, harmful, opposing प्रतिकूल

18. **shrink** (verb) – Fall, decrease, decline, diminish, lessen, dwindle कमी होना/ घटना

- **Threaten** (verb) – endanger, jeopardize, menace, intimidate, imperil खतरे में डालना
- **Defend** (verb) – Protect, guard, preserve, shield, secure बचाव करना
- **Fervour** (noun) – ardour, passion, zeal, vehemence, excitement उत्साह, जोश

19. **Deceleration** (noun) – Reduction in speed or rate गिरावट

- **Assurance** (noun) – confidence, certainty, conviction, sureness आश्वासन
- **Elevation** (noun) – promotion, upgrading, advancement, advance पदोन्नति
- **Conflict** (noun) – Battle, fight, war, struggle, skirmish, clash, encounter संघर्ष

20. **Venture** (noun) – a new business or business activity, especially one that involves risk उद्यम

- **Influence** (noun) – Power, sway, authority, weight, control बोलबाला, प्रभाव
- **Adoption** (noun) – Acceptance, implementation, espousal, acquiring अपनाना

- **Optimism** (noun) – Hopefulness, cheerfulness, buoyancy, positivity आशावाद

21. 'comparing to' के बदले 'compared with' का प्रयोग होना चाहिए, क्योंकि 'दो समान प्रकार की चीजों' की तुलना के लिए 'compare with' तथा 'दो असमान प्रकार की चीजों की तुलना के लिए' 'compare to' का प्रयोग होता है; जैसे-

- Sita is compared with Geeta.
- Sita is compared to the moon.

22. (B) **4123**

The latest industrial output estimates from the National Statistical Office indicate an across-the-board loss of momentum in December with overall production growth slowing to 4.3% year-on-year, from November's 7.3% pace. While activity was unchanged or moderated across all the three constituents of the Index of Industrial Production — mining, manufacturing and electricity — the largest sector manufacturing, with a weight of almost 78%, was the biggest drag as the expansion decelerated to 2.6%, from the preceding month's 6.4% increase. Assessed on a sequential or month-on-month basis, mining and manufacturing posted slowdowns, with only electricity growing 7.6% in the wake of November's contraction of 1.5%. Manufacturing, where the sequential growth slowed by more than 2 percentage points to 4.7%, from 6.9% in the previous month, was weighed down by three of the six use-based sectors including consumer durables, consumer non-durables and capital goods.

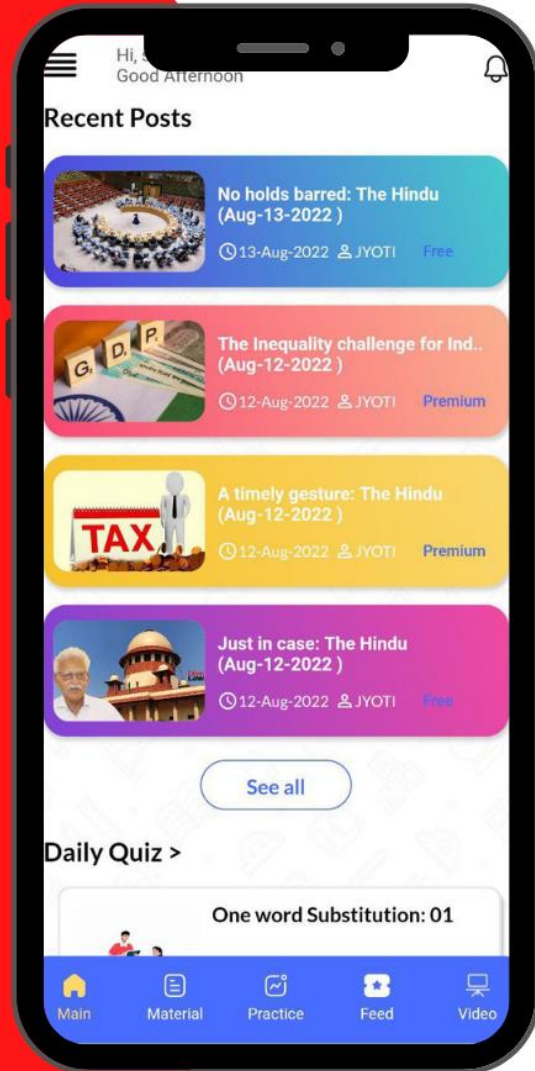
23. **Drag** (noun) – Hindrance, encumbrance; thing that impedes progress or development बाधा

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

Because the (i) sentence is not giving any meaning and correct sentences should be like
The company has struggled to find a **footing** in an industry suffering from overcapacity.

24. Month-on-month, the slowdown was starker with output barely inching up 0.2%, after expanding 13% in November. However, primary and infrastructure and construction goods offer hope that some positive momentum can be built on with the right policy measures.

25. **Scared of** – frightened of something or afraid that something bad might happen. किसी बात से डरना



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