

Challenge of change: On the realities in Iran and the need for reforms

Iran must **opt** for reforms and freedoms, especially for its women

The **remark** by Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that **poisoning** schoolgirls is an “**unforgivable** crime” **is** a **de facto** confirmation of reports that **thousands** of girls across the Islamic Republic **have** been **subject to** poison attacks over the last few months. The first such incident was reported in November in the holy city of Qom, **amidst** women’s **protests** that were **triggered** by the death of Iranian Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini while in the custody of the **infamous morality police**. Since then, **thousands** of girls in at least 25 of Iran’s 31 **provinces** **were reportedly** affected by poison attacks. Initially there were two theories, with the first suggesting that it could be an act by religious **extremists** opposed to girls attending schools and the second, that **psychological** factors could be the reason, at least in some cases. Mr. Khamenei’s comment suggests that the authorities are seriously considering the possibility of chemical poisoning. The reports have created panic, triggering protests in many parts of the country, **probably prompting** the Supreme Leader to make the statement. Mr. Khamenei said on Monday that the **regime** would not **spare** whoever was responsible. But on the same day, reports **emerged** of the arrest of the Qom journalist, Ali Pourtabatabaei, who reported on the poisoning.

Iran, **unlike** Afghanistan under the Taliban, **does** not have a history of preventing girls from attending schools. After the Islamic revolution of 1979, the regime **imposed** restrictions on women, but encouraged their education and joining the workforce. According to the World Bank, female **literacy** rose from 26% in 1976 to 85% in 2021. For more than a **decade**, women have **consistently outnumbered** men in Iran’s universities. **Given** this history, it is surprising that schoolgirls are being targeted, something which did not happen even at the **peak** of the **revolution**. Therefore, such incidents should **jolt** the authorities **into action**. It may not be a **coincidence** that the targeting of schoolgirls occurs at a time when **thousands** of women, including schoolgirls, **have** been demanding more freedoms. The regime’s response has been **brutal**. But the Mullahs should realise that if the economic and social crises **persist**, they would further **weaken** a regime that is already seeing waves of protests. In a growing **chasm** between the country’s youth and its **ageing revolutionaries**, **incidents** such as the poison attacks **would** only worsen the situation. The regime should **bring** those responsible **to justice**. But the bigger problem is the lack of reforms within Iran’s system and the **widening cracks** between the state and society. The wave of protests is as much a challenge to the regime as it is an opportunity to **drive** political reforms. The Mullahs should **embrace the latter** to **address the former**.

[Practice Exercise]

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

Vocabulary

1. **Opt** (verb) – Choose, select, pick, pick out, go for चुनना
2. **Remark** (noun) – Comment, Statement टिप्पणी
3. **Poisoning** (noun) – the act of killing or harming somebody/something by giving them poison ज़हर देना
4. **Unforgivable** (adjective) – (of behaviour) too bad to forgive: अक्षम्य, माफी न करने योग्य
5. **De facto** (adjective) – existing in fact, although not necessarily intended or legal
6. **Subject** (to) (adjective) – cause to experience or suffer or make liable or vulnerable to से गुज़रना, भुगतना
7. **Amidst** (preposition) – in the middle of. के बीच
8. **Protest** (noun) – a statement or action that shows that you do not like or approve of something विरोध
9. **Trigger** (verb) – Initiate, start, prompt, activate, cause, spark off, set off शुरू करना
10. **Infamous** (adjective) – notorious, ill-famed, disgraceful, disreputable कुख्यात
11. **Morality police** (noun) – any policy that seeks to use the coercive power of government to impose or legitimize one set of fundamental values or norms over a competing set (or sets) of values or norms.
12. **Province** (noun) – Area, Sphere, Field, Jurisdiction, Domain, Authority प्रांत/ प्रदेश
13. **Reportedly** (adverb) – supposedly, seemingly, apparently, allegedly कथित तौर पर
14. **Extremist** (noun) – fanatic, radical, zealot, fundamentalist, hardliner चरमपंथी
15. **Psychological** (adjective) – connected with the mind or the way that it works मन से या मानसिक प्रक्रियाओं से संबंधित
16. **Probably** (adverb) – perhaps, maybe, possibly, शायद
17. **Prompt** (verb) – induce, provoke, inspire, stimulate, motivate, lead प्रेरित करना
18. **Regime** (noun) – system, arrangement, scheme, code व्यवस्था
19. **Spare** (verb) – not harm, leave uninjured, leave unhurt; Make free बख़्श देना

20. **Emerge** (verb) – come out, appear, come into view, become visible उभरना/ बाहर आना
21. **Unlike** (adjective) – in contrast to; different from के विपरीत; से भिन्न
22. **Impose** (verb) – foist, force, thrust, inflict थोपना
23. **Literacy** (noun) – the ability to read and write. साक्षरता
24. **Decade** (noun) – A period of 10 years दशक
25. **Consistently** (adverb) – Constantly, always, time after time, time and again लगातार
26. **Outnumber** (verb) – be more numerous than. संख्या में अधिक होना
27. **Given** (preposition) – considering, taking into account, bearing in mind देखते हुए
28. **Peak** (noun) – the point of highest activity चरम पर
29. **Revolution** (noun) – a change in the way a country is governed, usually to a different political system and often using violence or war क्रांति
30. **Jolt** (verb) – startle, surprise, shock, stun, shake झटका देना
31. **Into action** (phrase) – into operation सक्रिय स्थिति में
32. **Coincidence** (noun) – chance, concurrence, fluke, happenstance संयोग
33. **Brutal** (adjective) – cruel, savage, vicious, ruthless, barbaric क्रूर
34. **Persist** (verb) – persevere, continue, carry on, go on कायम रहना
35. **Weaken** (verb) – undermine, diminish, lessen, reduce, impair कमज़ोर करना
36. **Chasm** (noun) – gap, difference, dissension, disunion के बीच की खाई
37. **Ageing** (adjective) – to become or look old बूढ़ा हो जाना
38. **Revolutionary** (noun) – a person who starts or supports action to try to change the government of a country, especially by using violent methods क्रांतिकारी व्यक्ति
39. **Bring someone to justice** (phrase) – Arrest someone for a crime and ensure that they are tried/suited in court.
40. **Widening** (adjective) – broadening, extending, expanding, enlarging, increasing बढ़ती
41. **Crack** (noun) – Break, fissure, flaw, fault, crevice दरार

42. **Drive** (verb) – Cause something to happen

43. **Embrace** (verb) – Accept, include, encompass, incorporate, contain
अपनाना

44. **The latter** (noun) – Here it refers to 'opportunity'.

45. **Address** (verb) – tackle, see to, deal with, confront, grapple with सुलझाना, निपटाना

46. **The former** (noun) – Here it refers to 'wave of protest'.

Practice Exercise

[Editorial Page]

- What is the main message conveyed in the passage?**
 - Iran is a country where girls are not allowed to attend school.
 - Thousands of girls in Iran have been affected by poison attacks over the past few months.
 - Iran is facing economic and social crises that are weakening the regime.
 - The Iranian regime needs to embrace political reforms to address societal challenges.
- What is the probable reason for the recent poison attacks on schoolgirls in Iran?**
 - Religious extremists oppose girls attending schools.
 - Psychological factors have caused some individuals to target schoolgirls.
 - The Iranian regime is intentionally poisoning schoolgirls to suppress dissent.
 - None of the above.
- How has the Iranian regime responded to the recent protests in the country?**
 - By listening to the demands of the protesters and implementing necessary reforms.
 - By using brutal force to suppress dissent.
 - By arresting journalists who report on the poison attacks.
 - By blaming other countries for the unrest.
- How has female literacy in Iran changed since 1976?**
 - It has remained stagnant.
 - It has decreased.
 - It has slightly increased.
 - It has significantly increased.
- Why does the author argue that the wave of protests in Iran is both a challenge and an opportunity for the regime?**
 - Because the protests are weakening the regime but also providing a chance for reforms.
 - Because the protests are strengthening the regime and creating a more stable society.
 - Because the protests are causing the regime to become more authoritarian.
 - Because the protests are having no impact on the regime.

Direction: In the following passage some words have been deleted. Fill in the blanks with the help of the alternatives given. Select the most appropriate option for each number.

In its first meeting of this calendar year, the monetary policy committee of the Reserve Bank of India has voted to raise the benchmark repo rate by 25 basis points, continuing its efforts to bring down inflation. Since the beginning of this tightening cycle, the MPC has cumulatively hiked rates by 250 basis points. The repo rate now stands at 6.5 per cent. Alongside, the committee has also retained its _____1_____, deciding to remain focused on withdrawal of accommodation. The tone of the policy was decidedly hawkish. The MPC noted that policy action was required to keep inflation expectations _____2_____, and “break” the persistence in core inflation. However, the decision of the committee was not unanimous. While the growing dissensions within the committee suggest that the terminal rate — the rate at which the central bank will stop hiking rates and take a pause — is _____3_____, there is a possibility of further tightening if the situation _____4_____. As RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has pointed _____5_____, adjusting for inflation, the policy rate still trails its pre pandemic level.

6. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 1.**
- A. Disincentive
 - B. Stance
 - C. Chunk
 - D. Allegation
7. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 2.**
- A. Thwarted
 - B. Impugned
 - C. Defamed
 - D. Anchored
8. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 3.**
- A. Beleaguered
 - B. Approaching
 - C. Convincing
 - D. Sole
9. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 4.**
- A. Warrants
 - B. Constitutes
 - C. Inverts
 - D. Amends
10. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 5.**
- A. In
 - B. Over
 - C. Out
 - D. Up

Directions: Given below are four sentences, three of which, are jumbled.

11. **Pick the option that gives the correct order.**

- A. Although he was successful in international industry, George was still not a very well educated man.
- B. So, George never had any difficulties with him and trusted him completely.
- C. Usually, he did not have much time to go through a speech, but the speechwriter wrote clever things for George to say.
- D. He began to have speeches written for him by a special speechwriter.

A. ADBC B. ACBD C. ADCB D. ABCD

Directions: In the following questions, a sentence has been given in Active/Passive Voice. Out of the four alternatives suggested, select the one which best expresses the same sentence in Passive/Active Voice.

12. **You will be asked some questions by the police now.**

- A. The police asked you some questions now.
- B. The police ask you some questions now.
- C. The police will be asking you some questions now.
- D. The police will ask you some questions now.

13. You are requested to leave your phones at the reception.

- A. Please requesting leave your phones at the reception.
- B. Please leave your phones at the reception.
- C. Please left your phones at the reception.
- D. Please leaving your phones at the reception.

Directions: In the following questions, a sentence has been given in Direct/Indirect Speech. Out of the four alternatives suggested, select the one which best expresses the same sentence in Indirect/Direct Speech.

14. The doctor said to my mother, "Take your medicines regularly."

- A. The doctor advised my mother to take her medicines regularly.
- B. The doctor told my mother take her medicines regularly.
- C. The doctor ordered my mother to take your medicines regularly.
- D. The doctor told my mother to take his medicines regularly

15. The manager said, "The meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow"

- A. The manager said that the meeting had been scheduled for tomorrow.
- B. The manager said that the meeting has been scheduled for the next day.
- C. The manager said that the meeting had been scheduled for the next day.
- D. The manager said that the meeting was scheduled for the next day.

Directions: In the following questions, out of the four alternatives, choose the one which can be substituted for the given words/sentence.

16. Name taken by an author instead of his real name

- A. Hyperbole
- B. Pseudonym
- C. Sonorous
- D. Sprint

17. A person who is fond of fighting

- A. Pandemonium
- B. Bellicose
- C. Wreathe
- D. Truant

Directions : Choose the alternative which best expresses the meaning of the Idiom/Phrase.

18. This is not a rumour, I heard it straight from the horse's mouth

- A. to suspect foul play in something
- B. to hear directly from someone who knows
- C. to believe something easily and quickly
- D. to challenge facts that are presented

19. This man's taking a bribe is only the tip of an iceberg

- A. problem a ship faces on the ocean
- B. a legally punishable crime
- C. something that has been in existence for a long time
- D. something which is a small part of something much bigger

Directions: Select the most appropriate option to substitute the underlined segment in the given sentence. If there is no need to substitute it, select 'No substitution'.

20. No sooner did she start running than she tripped and fell
- A. when she trips and falls
 - B. No substitution
 - C. and she was tripped and fallen
 - D. than she trip and fell
21. The silence of the library was broken only by an occasional cough.
- A. not by
 - B. ever by
 - C. and by
 - D. No substitution needed

Directions : Find out the error, if any –

22. Unless (A)/ you will study hard, (B)/ you cannot pass. (C)/ no error (D)
23. On last Saturday (A)/ I met my friend (B)/ accidentally. (C)/ no error (D)
24. I like (A)/ the poetries (B)/ of Byron and Shelley. (C)/ no error(D)
25. The principal and the staff (A)/ are awaiting for (B)/ the chief guest. (C)/ no error(D)

Answers

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

Explanation

- The passage discusses the recent poison attacks on schoolgirls in Iran, and argues that these incidents should prompt the Iranian regime to address the lack of reforms within its system. Therefore, option d) is the correct answer.
- The passage suggests that the first theory that the poison attacks are the work of religious extremists opposed to girls attending schools is a probable reason. Option a) is therefore the correct answer.
- The passage states that the Iranian regime's response to the protests has been brutal. Option b) is the correct answer.
- The passage states that female literacy in Iran has risen from 26% in 1976 to 85% in 2021. Therefore, option d) is the correct answer.
- The author argues that the wave of protests is both a challenge to the regime and an opportunity to drive political reforms. Therefore, option a) is the correct answer.
- Stance** (noun) – attitude, stand, point of view, viewpoint, opinion, way of thinking रख
 - Disincentive** (noun) – Deterrent, discouragement, hindrance, impediment, encumbrance, lack of encouragement निरुत्साहन
 - Chunk** (noun) – a significant amount of something. अंश, भाग, हिस्सा
 - Allegation** (noun) – charge, accusation, claim, assertion, declaration आरोप
- Anchor** (verb) – Fix (a price, rate, or amount) at a particular level.
 - Thwart** (verb) – prevent, stop, foil (from accomplishing something) विफल करना
 - Impugn** (verb) – challenge, question, call into question चुनौती देना
 - Defame** (verb) – damage the good reputation of (someone); insult, vilify बदनाम करना
- Approaching** (adjective) – coming nearer in distance or time. आने वाला
 - Beleaguered** (adjective) – in a very difficult situation. से जूझना
 - Convincing** (adjective) – cogent, persuasive, powerful, potent, strong, forceful ठोस
 - Sole** (adjective) – one and only, single, solitary, lone एकमात्र, अकेला
- Warrant** (verb) – Justify or necessitate (a certain course of action) ज़रूरी बनाना
 - Constitute** (verb) – form, establish, make, compose, institute बनाना, गठित करना
 - Invert** (verb) – reverse, upturn; to reverse in position, order, direction पलटना
 - Amend** (verb) – revise, alter, change, modify, qualify संशोधन करना
- Point out** (phrasal verb) – indicate, mention, note, highlight, emphasize इशारा करना
- ADCB**

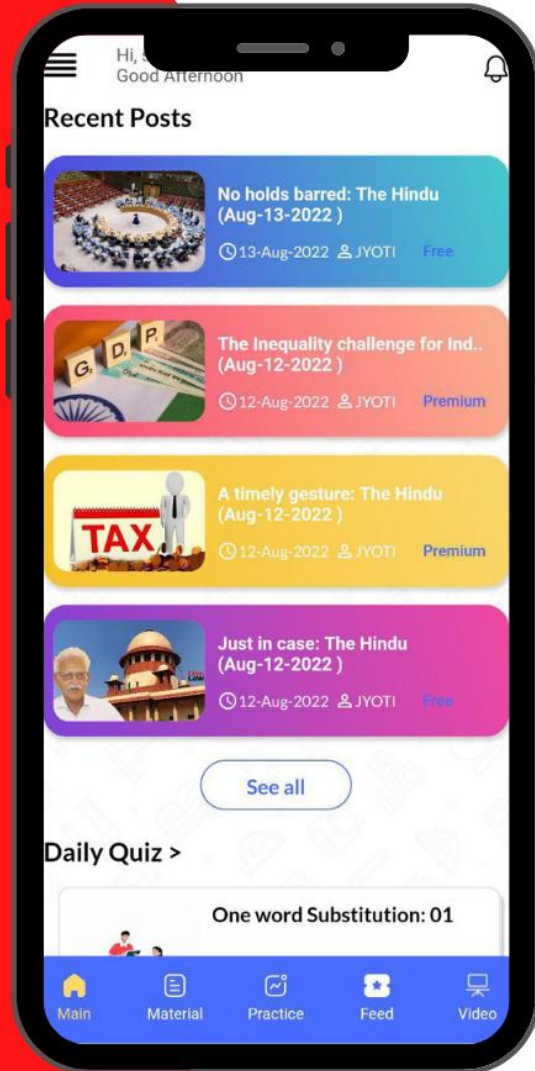
Although he was successful in international industry, George was still not a very well educated man. He began to have speeches written for him by a special speechwriter. Usually, he did not have much time to go through a speech, but the speechwriter wrote clever things for George to say. So, George never had any difficulties with him and trusted him completely.

12. The police will ask you some questions now.
13. Please leave your phones at the reception.
14. The doctor advised my mother to take her medicines regularly.
15. The manager said that the meeting had been scheduled for the next day.
16. **Pseudonym** – Name taken by an author instead of his real name छद्म नाम
 - **Hyperbole** – An exaggerated statement अतिशयोक्ति
 - **Sonorous** – Having a deep and pleasant sound ध्वनिमय
 - **Sprint** – To run at full speed over a short distance कम दूरी की तेज़ दौड़
17. **Bellicose** – A person who is fond of fighting लड़ाकू
 - **Pandemonium** – Wild and noisy disorder कोलाहल
 - **Wreath** – Flowers fastened in a circle माला से सजाना
 - **Truant** – One who stays away from school/work without permission कामचोर, आवारा
18. **From the horse's mouth** (phrase) – to hear directly from someone who knows किसी जानने वाले से सीधे सुनना
19. **The tip of an iceberg** (phrase) – something which is a small part of something much bigger कोई ऐसी चीज जो किसी बड़ी चीज का छोटा सा अंश हो
20. No substitution
21. No substitution needed
22. (B) 'will study' के बदले 'study' का प्रयोग होगा।
 - 'will study' will be replaced by 'study'.
23. (A) 'Last' के पहले 'the' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'last/next' का प्रयोग यदि day के नाम के बाद हो तो इनके पहले 'the' का प्रयोग नहीं होता है किन्तु day के नाम के पहले हो तो 'the' का प्रयोग होता है; जैसे-
 - i. He came here on Monday last.
 - ii. He came here on the last Monday.
 - 'the' will be used before 'Last' because if 'last/next' is used after the name of the day then 'the' is not used before them but before the name of the day then 'the' is used; like-
 - i. He came here on Monday last.
 - ii. He came here on the last Monday.
24. (B) 'poetries' के बदले 'poetry' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'poetry' एक uncountable noun है और इसका plural नहीं बनाया जा सकता है।

- 'poetry' will be used instead of 'poetries' because 'poetry' is an uncountable noun and cannot be made plural.

25. (B) 'for' का प्रयोग नहीं होगा क्योंकि 'await' = 'wait for' (के लिए प्रतीक्षा करना) ।

'for' will not be used because 'await' = 'wait for'.



Learn Vocabulary Through Reading Articles

English Madhyam

