Ready, or not: On rising numbers of COVID-19 cases and India's state of preparedness

Health systems must **gear up** to face the fresh rise in COVID-19 cases

The better part of **management** is preparedness. Unless a certain **clairvoyance**, inspired by evidence, **is** possible and systems are ready, **post facto** management could be **a damp squib.** The rising **numbers** of COVID-19 cases in the country **indicate** the need to gear up again. On April 12, a total of 7,830 new cases were reported in a 24-hour period, according to the Union Health Ministry's data, possibly the highest in over 200 days. There are over 40,000 active cases in the country as on date. A **lineage** of the Omicron virus called XBB.1.16 **is** said to be behind the current rapid **proliferation** of cases in the country. **Fatalities** are also slowly increasing, being reported from States where there had been no deaths reported for months. It might be **reassuring** that **initial studies** of the behaviour of XBB.1.16 **show** milder infections not requiring **hospitalisation**, indicating that it is not a very **virulent strain**. However, health systems can **scarcely** afford to be under prepared, especially **considering** the recent **traumatic** experience of a **raging** pandemic **taking a huge toll.**

In any **long-winded** battle **in the realm of** public health, a sense of **fatigue** is **inevitable**, particularly during a pandemic when the demand on health human resources and **infrastructure** is **relentless**. Every **opportunity** to **lay down** the burden **will** be **seized**, naturally, and low infection levels over time can **lead to complacence**. The rising number of COVID-19 cases in India is that call to **rouse** health systems across the country and have them in a state of **readiness** to **meet** the challenge. The **difference** though, between March 2023 and March 2020, **is** that the world is no longer **COVID-naive**. The experience has given an indication of how to be prepared, even if the World Health Organization has **come round** to treating COVID-19 similar to seasonal **influenza**. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, at the meeting of the COVID-19 taskforce two weeks ago, rightly **advised** States to focus on the **stratagem** that worked earlier — 'test-track-treat-vaccinate' and **adhere to COVID-appropriate behaviour**. He also **called for enhancing** lab **surveillance**, testing all **severe acute respiratory illness** cases, and for **drills** to be conducted regularly in hospitals, **nationwide**. Several States have brought in compulsory masking at various levels, and conducted drills. But, it is also clear from **prior** experience that a lot depends on **compliance** at the personal level — hand washing **hygiene**, masking, and reaching the hospital early particularly in the case of senior citizens and persons with **co-morbidities.** As governments prepare themselves, **strengthening** health systems, individuals should also be **prudent** to take adequate **precautions**.   **[Practice Exercise]**

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

Vocabulary

1. **State** (noun) – Condition, status, situation, position, phase स्थिति

2. **Preparedness** (noun) – Readiness, willingness, alertness, responsiveness तत्परता, मुस्तैदी

3. **Gear up** (phrasal verb) – Prepare, get ready, brace oneself, make ready, mobilize तैयार होना

4. **Management** (noun) – Administration, control, handling, direction, supervision प्रबंधन

5. **Clairvoyance** (noun) – Foresight, intuition, insight, perception, prescience सूक्ष्म दृष्टि

6. **Post facto** (adjective) – Retrospective, retroactive, after the event पश्चातः

7. **A damp squib** (noun) – a situation or event which is much less impressive than expected; Disappointment, letdown, anticlimax, failure निष्फलता

8. **Lineage** (noun) – Ancestry, descent, pedigree, genealogy वंशावली

9. **Proliferation** (noun) – Expansion, growth, increase, multiplication, spread फैलाव

10. **Fatality** (noun) – Casualty, death, mortality, loss of life मृत्यु

11. **Reassuring** (adjective) – Comforting, encouraging, heartening, uplifting, relieving संतोषजनक

12. **Mild** (adjective) – Gentle, moderate, soft, mellow, tender हलका

13. **Hospitalisation** (noun) – Admission, confinement, inpatient care, medical treatment, patient care अस्पताल में भर्ती

14. **Virulent** (adjective) – Aggressive, harmful, malignant, dangerous, toxic विषाक्त, आक्रामक

15. **Strain** (noun) – Variant, subtype, form, version, mutation प्रकार

16. **Scarcely** (adverb) – Barely, hardly, just, only just, narrowly मुश्किल से

17. **Considering** (preposition) – In view of, taking into account, given ध्यान में रखते हुए

18. **Traumatic** (adjective) – Distressing, upsetting, shocking, painful अभिघातक

19. **Raging** (adjective) – Intense, extreme, severe, powerful, vehement उग्र

20. **Take a toll** (phrase) – To take lives of person ;Cause damage, cause suffering, have an adverse effect प्रभाव डालना; व्यक्ति की जान लेना

21. **Long-winded** (adjective) – Lengthy, prolonged, protracted, drawn-out, extended लंबा

22. **In the realm of** (phrase) – Within the scope of, relating to, in the area of के दायरे में

23. **Fatigue** (noun) – Exhaustion, weariness, tiredness, lethargy, burnout थकावट

24. **Inevitable** (adjective) – Unavoidable, inescapable, certain, sure, fated अपरिहार्य

25. **Infrastructure** (noun) – Facilities, framework, structure, system, support ढांचा

26. **Relentless** (adjective) – Persistent, unyielding, continuous, constant, non-stop निरन्तर

27. **Lay down** (phrasal verb) – Establish, set, fix, determine, dictate निर्धारित करना

28. **Seize the opportunity** (phrase) – act quickly to use opportunity while available. मौके का लाभ उठाना

29. **Lead** (to) (verb) – Cause, give rise to, bring about, result in, produce वजह बनना

30. **Complacence** (noun) – Self-satisfaction, smugness, self-content, self-approval आत्मसंतुष्टि

31. **Hygiene** (noun) – Cleanliness, sanitation, sterility, purity स्वच्छता

32. **Rouse** (verb) – Awaken, wake up, stir, provoke, stimulate जगाना

33. **Readiness** (noun) – Preparedness, alertness, availability, eagerness, willingness तत्परता

34. **Meet** (verb) – Confront, face, tackle, address, encounter सामना करना

35. **Covid-naïve** (adjective) – Inexperienced, unacquainted, unfamiliar, unknowledgeable, uninformed कोविड-अनुभवहीन

36. **Come round** (phrasal verb) – Change opinion, reconsider, reevaluate, reassess, change one's mind विचार बदलना

37. **Influenza** (noun) – Flu, viral infection, grippe इनफ़्लूएंज़ा

38. **Stratagem** (noun) – Tactic, strategy, plan, scheme, maneuver युक्ति

39. **Adhere** (to) (verb) – Follow, abide by, comply with, observe, stick to पालन करना

40. **COVID-Appropriate behaviour** (noun) – Safe practices, preventive measures, protective actions, responsible conduct कोविड-उचित व्यवहार

41. **Call for** (phrasal verb) – Require, necessitate, demand, need मांग करना

42. **Enhance** (verb) – Improve, increase, boost, augment, amplify बढ़ाना

43. **Surveillance** (noun) – Monitoring, observation, supervision, watch, scrutiny निगरानी

44. **Severe** (adjective) – Intense, serious, grave, critical, harsh कठोर

45. **Acute** (adjective) – Sharp, severe, intense, extreme, critical तीव्र

46. **Respiratory** (adjective) – Breathing, pulmonary, lung-related श्वसनीय

47. **Illness** (noun) – Disease, sickness, ailment, disorder, malady बीमारी

48. **Drill** (noun) – Exercise, practice, training, rehearsal, simulation अभ्यास

49. **Nationwide** (adjective) – Countrywide, across the nation, throughout the country, all over the country देशव्यापी

50. **Prior** (adjective) – Previous, earlier, former, preceding पूर्व

51. **Compliance** (noun) – Conformity, adherence, obedience, observance, following अनुपालन

52. **Co-morbidity** (noun) – Concurrent illness, simultaneous condition, accompanying ailment सह-रोगिता

53. **Strengthen** (verb) – Reinforce, fortify, bolster, support, consolidate मजबूत करना

54. **Prudent** (adjective) – Wise, sensible, cautious, careful, judicious विवेकी

55. **Precaution** (noun) – Safety measure, preventive action, safeguard, protection सतर्कता

Summary of the Editorial

1. Rising COVID-19 cases in India, with 7,830 new cases reported on April 12 and over 40,000 active cases.

2. Omicron lineage XBB.1.16 causing rapid proliferation of cases.

3. Fatalities increasing in states where no deaths were reported for months.

4. XBB.1.16 strain found to cause milder infections, but health systems must be prepared.

5. Pandemic fatigue and complacency could hinder response to the rising number of cases.

6. Health systems must be in a state of readiness to meet the challenge.

7. Prior experience and knowledge should be utilized in the battle against COVID-19.

8. PM Narendra Modi advised states to follow 'test-track-treat-vaccinate' strategy and maintain COVID-appropriate behavior.

9. Enhanced lab surveillance, testing severe acute respiratory illness cases, and regular hospital drills recommended.

10. Compulsory masking in several states, but individual compliance crucial.

11. Governments should strengthen health systems and individuals must take adequate precautions.

Practice Exercise

1. **Which of the following best illustrates the main idea of the first paragraph**? **[Editorial page]**
   A. The XBB.1.16 strain of the Omicron virus is responsible for the increase in COVID-19 cases in the country.
   B. Preparedness in management is crucial to handle the rising COVID-19 cases.
   C. The recent rise in COVID-19 cases is the highest in over 200 days.
   D. Health systems are currently underprepared for the resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

2. **What is the key difference between March 2023 and March 2020 in terms of the world's preparedness for COVID-19**?
   A. The World Health Organization has developed a new vaccine.
   B. The world is no longer COVID-naive and has gained experience in dealing with the virus.
   C. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken over the COVID-19 taskforce.
   D. Compulsory masking has been introduced in several states.

3. **What was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advice to States during the meeting of the COVID-19 taskforce, in order to tackle the rising number of COVID-19 cases in India**?
   A. Increase health infrastructure spending
   B. Implement strict lockdown measures
   C. Provide financial incentives for vaccination
   D. Focus on the 'test-track-treat-vaccinate' stratagem and adhere to COVID-appropriate behavior

4. **What is one key factor that can determine the success of public health measures in controlling the rising number of COVID-19 cases in India**?
   A. Rapid construction of new hospitals
   B. Strict implementation of lockdown measures
   C. Personal compliance with hygiene and safety protocols
   D. Increased funding for vaccine development

5. **Based on the passage, which of the following statements is INCORRECT**?
   (i) Rising COVID-19 cases in India call for increased preparedness in health systems.
   (ii) The World Health Organization now treats COVID-19 similarly to seasonal influenza.
   (iii) Fatalities have been consistently high in all states.
   (iv) The passage suggests that health systems should not prepare for the XBB.1.16 strain since it is milder.
      A. (i), (ii)
      B. (ii), (iii)
      C. (iv), (iii)
      D. (i), (ii), (iii)

6. **Based on the tone of the passage, how does the author feel about preparedness in handling the rising COVID-19 cases**?

    A. Dismissive

    B. Doubtful

    C. Concerned

    D. Enthusiastic

7. **What is the main theme of the passage**?

    A. The consequences of not vaccinating against COVID-19

    B. The importance of preparedness in managing COVID-19 cases

    C. The need for more research on the XBB.1.16 variant

    D. The role of the World Health Organization in handling the pandemic

8. What is a synonym for **'clairvoyance'** as used in the passage?

    A. Ignorance

    B. Foresight

    C. Indifference

    D. Ambiguity

9. **Which idiom best describes the situation where low infection levels can lead to complacency**?

    A. Tit for tat

    B. Let sleeping dogs lie

    C. Throw in the towel

    D. Let one's guard down

10. **What is an antonym for 'virulent' based on the context of the passage**?

    A. Aggressive

    B. Contagious

    C. Mild

    D. Severe

Comprehension:

In the following passage, some words have been deleted. Read the passage carefully and select the most appropriate option to fill in each blank

A Jungle Safari is an exhilarating experience that allows one to _____(1)_____ the uncharted territories of the wild. The _____(2)_____ of diverse flora and fauna in their natural habitat leaves a lasting _____(3)_____ on the hearts and minds of adventurers. Exploring the lush green _____(4)_____ while listening to the melodies of various creatures provides a sense of _____(5)_____ that is hard to describe

11. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 1**.

    A. exploit

    B. disregard

    C. traverse

    D. forsake

12. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 2**
    A. devastation
    B. spectacle
    C. eradication
    D. dismissal

13. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 3**
    A. turmoil
    B. impression
    C. agitation
    D. rupture

14. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 4**
    A. wasteland
    B. desert
    C. metropolis
    D. canopy

15. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 5**
    A. serenity
    B. confusion
    C. turmoil
    D. havoc

16. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph**
    P. Not long after that, he resigned from his position as chief commercial officer for small and medium businesses at Yandex, Russia's equivalent to Google and the country's largest technology company.
    Q. Seven days after the invasion of Ukraine, Vladimir Belugin packed up his and his family's belongings, canceled the lease on his apartment in Moscow, withdrew his kids from kindergarten, and started a new life outside of Russia.
    R. Belugin said from his new home in Cyprus: "You have to accept the new rules of having no rules at all in Russia."
    S. The war meant that everything would change in Russia, both for him and for his company,
       A. QPSR
       B. QRSP
       C. RSQP
       D. QPSR

17. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph**
    P. Flight simulators are a hell of a drug. It was a lesson I learned the hard way during the early days of the global pandemic when I sought out a new hobby to fill my endless days stuck at home.

Q. I decided to dive into the world of flight simming, inspired by the gorgeous, hyperrealistic screenshots from the recently released 2020 Microsoft Flight Simulator (MSFS) that I kept seeing online.

R. When even a simple trip to the grocery store felt like a major health risk, it seemed like a great way to explore the world — virtually, at least.

S. Rather than take up a more conventional covid hobby like baking bread,
   A. RQSP
   B. PSQR
   C. RSPQ
   D. PSRQ

18. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph**

P. His father, Irfan, ran a small tannery business, where young Volkan would trail behind him, taking notes on all the recipes and processes, nostrils filled with the pungent smell of corrosive chemicals and decaying flesh.

Q. Growing up in Biga, Turkey, on the soil where the ancient Trojan War was once fought, Volkan Yilmazwas surrounded by leather.

R. Now, 25 years later, under the moniker Tanner Leatherstein, Yilmaz is parlaying his insight into leather into an addictive TikTok presence involving entertaining vivisections of designer leather bags.

S. By the age of 11, he had already learned how to tan his first sheepskin.
   A. PQRS
   B. QPSR
   C. SRQP
   D. RPQS

19. **Select the most appropriate option that can substitute the underlined segment in the given sentence**

Antonio Stradivari was an Italian ***who is being made wonderful*** violins
   A. who have made wonderful
   B. who makes wonderful
   C. who made wonderful
   D. who is made wonderful

20. **Select the most appropriate option that can substitute the underlined segment in the given sentence. If there is no need to substitute it, select 'No substitution required'**

As Simon had already been to the park, he ***lead the way*** for the other children
   A. No substitution required
   B. leading the way
   C. led the way
   D. lead away

Answers

1. B 2. B 3. D 4. C 5. C 6. C 7. B 8. B 9. D 10. C 11. C 12. C

13. B 14. D 15. A 16. D 17. B 18. B 19. C 20. C.   **[Practice Exercise]**

Explanations

1. b) Preparedness in management is crucial to handle the rising COVID-19 cases.
   The paragraph primarily emphasizes the importance of preparedness in management to effectively tackle the increasing number of COVID-19 cases. While it mentions the current situation and the XBB.1.16 strain of the Omicron virus, the focus remains on the need to gear up and be prepared to handle the resurgence of cases, especially considering the country's previous experience with the pandemic.

2. B. The world is no longer COVID-naive and has gained experience in dealing with the virus.
   The paragraph discusses the rising number of COVID-19 cases in India, emphasizing the importance of maintaining vigilance and preparedness. It points out that the difference between March 2023 and March 2020 is that the world is no longer COVID-naive, as it has gained experience and learned how to be prepared for dealing with the virus. This is a critical thinking question as it requires the reader to understand and analyze the key point of the paragraph.

3. Focus on the 'test-track-treat-vaccinate' stratagem and adhere to COVID-appropriate behavior
   In the given paragraph, it is mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at the meeting of the COVID-19 taskforce, advised States to focus on the stratagem that worked earlier — 'test-track-treat-vaccinate' and adhere to COVID-appropriate behavior. This advice was given in light of the rising number of COVID-19 cases in India and the need to have health systems in a state of readiness to meet the challenge.

4. c) Personal compliance with hygiene and safety protocols
   The paragraph highlights the importance of individuals adhering to hygiene and safety practices such as hand washing, masking, and seeking early medical intervention, especially for senior citizens and those with co-morbidities. It emphasizes that while government efforts are crucial in strengthening health systems, personal compliance with these measures significantly contributes to the success of public health initiatives in controlling the spread of COVID-19.

5. C. Statement (iv), (iii) are Incorrect

6. C) Concerned
   Explanation: The author emphasizes the importance of preparedness in handling the rising COVID-19 cases and expresses concern over the possible complacency due to low infection levels. The tone indicates that the author believes health systems need to be ready to meet the challenge and that individuals should also take adequate precautions.

7. B) The importance of preparedness in managing COVID-19 cases
   Explanation: The main theme of the passage is the importance of preparedness in managing the rising COVID-19 cases in the country. The author highlights the need for health systems to

be ready to face the challenges posed by the virus, and for individuals to take adequate precautions. The passage discusses the significance of learning from past experiences and following proven strategies, such as 'test-track-treat-vaccinate' and adhering to COVID-appropriate behavior.

8. b) Foresight

    Explanation: In the passage, 'clairvoyance' is used to describe the ability to foresee future events or anticipate problems, which is similar in meaning to 'foresight.'

9. d) Let one's guard down

    Explanation: The idiom "let one's guard down" means to become less vigilant or careful, which aptly describes the situation mentioned in the passage where low infection levels can lead to complacency.

10. c) Mild

    Explanation: In the passage, the term 'virulent' is used to describe the potency or severity of the virus strain. An antonym for 'virulent' would be 'mild,' which indicates a less severe or potent virus strain.

11. **Traverse** (verb) – To travel or move across, through, or over (an area or terrain); to pass through or over something, often in a diagonal or winding path. पार करना

    - **exploit** (verb) – utilize, capitalize on, leverage, take advantage of, harness लाभ उठाना

    - **disregard** (verb) – ignore, overlook, neglect, dismiss, pay no heed to उपेक्षा करना

    - **forsake** (verb) – abandon, desert, leave, relinquish, renounce त्यागना

12. **Spectacle** (noun) – A visually striking performance or display, an event or scene that is impressive and eye-catching, often characterized by grandeur or drama. प्रदर्शनी

    - **devastation** (noun) – destruction, ruin, desolation, wreckage, catastrophe तबाही

    - **eradication** (noun) – elimination, extermination, obliteration, annihilation, extirpation नाश, उन्मूलन

    - **dismissal** (noun) – termination, discharge, ousting, expulsion, removal बरख़ास्तगी

13. **Impression** (noun) – A feeling or idea that is formed about something or someone without conscious thought, often based on a brief experience or limited information. छाप, धारणा
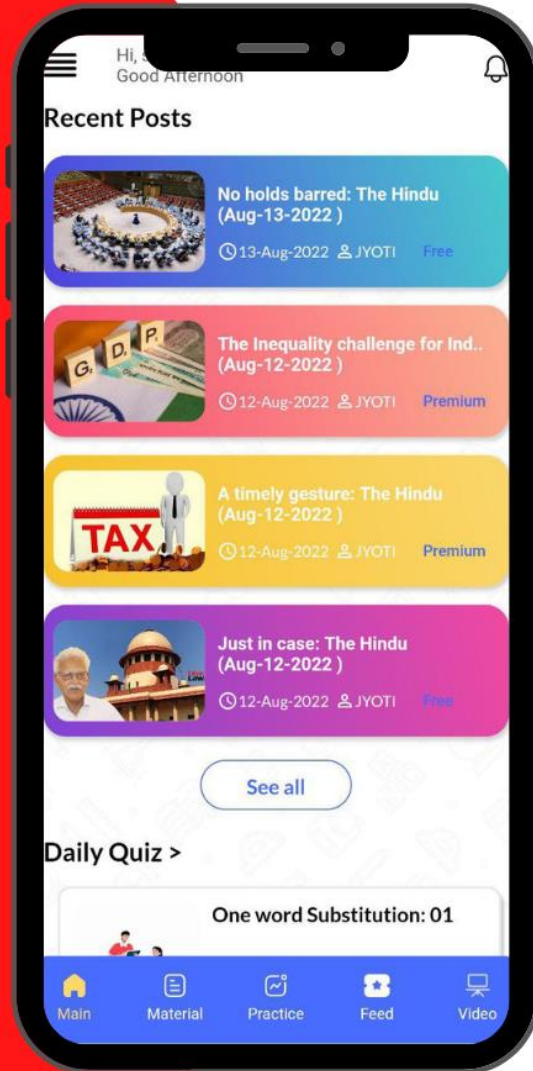
    - **turmoil** (noun) – chaos, disorder, unrest, commotion, upheaval उथल-पुथल

    - **agitation** (noun) – disturbance, perturbation, disquiet, unrest, turmoil आंदोलन, उत्तेजना

    - **rupture** (noun) – break, fracture, split, breach, tear टूटना

14. c) **Canopy** (noun) – refers to the upper layer of trees in a forest, formed by the branches and leaves.

- **Wasteland** (noun) – A wasteland refers to a barren or desolate area of land that is typically uninhabitable or uncultivated due to factors such as environmental degradation, natural disasters, or human activity. Wastelands may include abandoned industrial sites, contaminated lands, or areas affected by extreme weather conditions. बंजर भूमि

- **Desert** (noun) – A desert is a large, arid region characterized by little to no precipitation, sparse vegetation, and extreme temperature fluctuations. Deserts can be hot, like the Sahara, or cold, like the Antarctic, and their inhospitable conditions make it difficult for many forms of life to survive. रेगिस्तान

- **Metropolis** (noun) – A metropolis is a large, densely populated urban area that serves as a major center of culture, commerce, and political influence. Metropolises are typically characterized by a diverse population, extensive infrastructure, and a variety of cultural and entertainment options. महानगर

15. **Serenity** (noun) –A state of being calm, peaceful, and untroubled; an absence of agitation or disturbance. शांति

- **confusion** (noun) – disarray, disorder, chaos, disorganization, bewilderment उलझन

- **turmoil** (noun) – (already provided above) chaos, disorder, unrest, commotion, upheaval उथल-पुथल

- **havoc** (noun) – destruction, mayhem, chaos, disorder, devastation तबाही

16. **QPSR**

Seven days after the invasion of Ukraine, Vladimir Belugin packed up his and his family's belongings, canceled the lease on his apartment in Moscow, withdrew his kids from kindergarten, and started a new life outside of Russia. Not long after that, he resigned from his position as chief commercial officer for small and medium businesses at Yandex, Russia's equivalent to Google and the country's largest technology company. The war meant that everything would change in Russia, both for him and for his company, Belugin said from his new home in Cyprus: "You have to accept the new rules of having no rules at all in Russia."

17. B) **PSQR**

Flight simulators are a hell of a drug. It was a lesson I learned the hard way during the early days of the global pandemic when I sought out a new hobby to fill my endless days stuck at home. Rather than take up a more conventional covid hobby like baking bread, I decided to dive into the world of flight simming, inspired by the gorgeous, hyperrealistic screenshots from the recently released 2020 Microsoft Flight Simulator (MSFS) that I kept seeing online. When even a simple trip to the grocery store felt like a major health risk, it seemed like a great way to explore the world — virtually, at least.

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Growing up in Biga, Turkey, on the soil where the ancient Trojan War was once fought, Volkan Yilmazwas surrounded by leather. His father, Irfan, ran a small tannery business, where young Volkan would trail behind him, taking notes on all the recipes and processes, nostrils filled with the pungent smell of corrosive chemicals and decaying flesh. By the age of 11, he had already learned how to tan his first sheepskin. Now, 25 years later, under the moniker Tanner Leatherstein, Yilmaz is parlaying his insight into leather into an addictive TikTok presence involving entertaining vivisections of designer leather bags.

19. 'who is being made wonderful' के बदले ' who made wonderful ' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'Antonio Stradivari was an Italian' से पता चलता है कि घटना Past की है!

20. 'lead the way' के बदले ' led the way ' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'As Simon had already been to the park' से पता चलता है कि घटना Past की है!

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