Tragic unpreparedness: on the Maharashtra heatwave incident

Governments must prepare people to deal with extreme weather events

The state of the ongoing global climate crisis is such that India is going to have hotter hot days and more of them every year. While some of the blame for the effects — heat-related morbidity and mortality — may lie at the feet of meteorological caprice, the bulk of it will lie at the door of the government, whose responsibility it is to deal with and manage foreseeable inevitabilities. On April 16, nearly a million people gathered on an uncovered ground in Navi Mumbai for an event in which social activist Dattatreya Narayan received a State award, with Union Ministers Amit Shah and Kapil Patil, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis joining him on a covered podium. More than 120 people suffered considerable heat stress; 13 died and 18 others were hospitalised. Mr. Shinde called the deaths "very unfortunate", but fortune had nothing to do with it. News reports said that individuals, especially police personnel, were scrambling to bring drinking water to those in distress (because water at the site had become too hot to drink), and to carry them on motorcycles to avail medical assistance. This speaks less to their resourcefulness and more to the absence of a systematic plan for the event that accounted for predictable second-order problems.

After the event, experts also said that the area lacked a local India Meteorological Department station to issue heat alerts. This **misses the point**. Many places in India are likely to have a large political event before an official weather station. This, together with the rapid onset of India's heat crisis, puts the spotlight on the fundamental yet elusive cause of climate-related injustice: the persistence of conditions in which some people are at the mercy of their employers or their leaders, in order to survive a hot day, or, as at the April 16 event, even a few hot hours. As long as this imbalance in relationship is allowed to exist, heat action plans and heat alerts can only be of limited benefit. Instead, India must work towards becoming a country in which every individual is equipped with climate-literacy sufficient to know why higher temperature plus higher relative humidity and/or dehydration equals high risk of injury and death, and the ability to access cool and clean drinking water, **ventilated** shelter and **lodging**, and **affordable** emergency medical care wherever, whenever. Notice how these requirements are similar to those required to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in fact most national crises. This is not a coincidence. Governments must destroy conditions in which people are denied the means to prepare themselves for a crisis. But on April 16, a government created them. [Practice Exercise]

- Morbidity (noun) the condition of suffering from a disease or medical condition. रुग्णता
- Mortality (noun) death, especially on a large scale. मृत्यू दर
- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

Vocabulary

- 1. **Tragic** (adjective) Catastrophic, disastrous, heartbreaking, calamitous, woeful भयंकर
- Unpreparedness (noun) Unreadiness, lack of preparation, disorganization, improvisation तैयारी न होना
- 3. Heatwave (noun) Heat spell, hot spell, scorching weather, sweltering heat लू
- 4. **Deal with** (phrasal verb) Tackle, handle, manage, cope with, address निपटना
- 5. **Ongoing** (adjective) Continuing, in progress, underway, unceasing, persistent जारी
- Lay the blame at the feet of (phrase) Attribute responsibility to, hold responsible, accuse, charge दोष लगाना
- Lay the blame at the door of (phrase) Assign fault to, impute, blame, point the finger at दोषारोपण करना
- 8. **Meteorological** (adjective) Weatherrelated, atmospheric, climatic, weatherwise मौसमी
- 9. **Caprice** (noun) Whim, unpredictability, impulsiveness, fickleness, changeability सनक, अनिश्चितता
- 10. Foreseeable (adjective) Anticipated, expected, predictable, likely, probable निकट

- 11. Inevitability (noun) Certainty, unavoidability, inescapability, assuredness अपरिहार्यता
- 12. **Podium** (noun) Platform, stage, dais, rostrum, lectern मंच
- 13. **Considerable** (adjective) Substantial, significant, major, noteworthy, sizable काफी
- 14. Heat stress (noun) Heat exhaustion, heatstroke, overheating, thermal stress
- 15. **Unfortunate** (adjective) Regrettable, distressing, sad, lamentable, unlucky दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण
- 16. Fortune (noun) Luck, chance, fate, destiny, providence भाग्य
- 17. **Scramble** (verb) to move or climb quickly but with difficulty, often using your hands to help you संघर्ष करना
- 18. **Distress** (noun) Suffering, anguish, pain, discomfort, misery पीड़ा
- 19. **Avail** (verb) Utilize, employ, use, take advantage of, benefit from লাभ उठाना
- 20. **Assistance** (noun) Help, aid, support, cooperation, facilitation सहायता
- 21. **Resourcefulness** (noun) Ingenuity, inventiveness, creativity, imagination, innovation कुशलता, सूझ-बूझ

- 22. **Systematic** (adjective) Methodical, organized, structured, orderly, wellplanned व्यवस्थित
- 23. Account for (phrasal verb) to explain the reason for something or the cause of something के लिये उत्तरदयी होना
- 24. **Predictable** (adjective) Foreseeable, expected, anticipated, unsurprising, obvious अनुमानित
- 25. **Lack** (verb) Be without, not have, be short of, be deficient in, be deprived of कमी होना
- 26. Miss the point (phrase) Overlook the main issue, fail to grasp the essence, misunderstand the core argument
- 27. **Rapid** (adjective) Fast, swift, quick, speedy शीघ्र
- 28. **Onset** (noun) Beginning, start, commencement, initiation शूरुआत
- 29. **Put the spotlight on** (phrase) Highlight, emphasize, underscore, draw attention to ध्यान आकर्षित करना
- 30. **Elusive** (adjective) Difficult to find, evasive, hard to catch, slippery कठिन लगने वाला,
- 31. **Injustice** (noun) Unfairness, inequity, inequality, discrimination अन्याय

- 32. **Persistence** (noun) Tenacity, determination, perseverance, steadfastness दृढ़ता, निरंतरता
- 33. **At the mercy of** (phrase) Vulnerable to, at the disposal of, under the control of की दया पर, किसी के वश में होना
- 34. In order to (phrase) For the purpose of, to achieve, with the aim of ताकि
- 35. Imbalance (noun) Disparity, inequality, disproportion, unevenness असंत्लन
- 36. **Exist** (verb) Be present, be, live, subsist होना
- 37. (be) **Equipped** (with) (adjective) Provided, furnished, supplied, outfitted से लैस होना
- 38. Climate-literacy sufficient (noun) Adequate understanding of climate, sufficient climate knowledge, climateawareness proficiency जलवायु की पर्याप्त समझ
- 39. Humidity (noun) Moisture, dampness, wetness, mugginess नमी
- 40. **Dehydration** (noun) Water deficiency, desiccation, drying out, fluid loss निर्जलीकरण
- 41. Ventilated (adjective) Aerated, wellaired, aired out, well-ventilated हवादार

- 42. Lodging (noun) Accommodation, housing, quarters, shelter अस्थायी आवास
- 43. **Affordable** (adjective) Reasonably priced, economical, budget-friendly, cost-effective सस्ती
- 44. **Coincidence** (noun) Chance, happenstance, serendipity, fluke संयोग
- 45. **Means** (noun) Resources, assets, funds, capital आर्थिक सामर्थ्य

Summary of the Editorial

- 1. India faces an increasing number of hotter days due to the ongoing global climate crisis.
- 2. Governments are responsible for managing and dealing with the effects of extreme weather events.
- 3. On April 16, nearly a million people attended an event in Navi Mumbai with no shade or cover.
- 4. Union Ministers, Maharashtra Chief Minister, and Deputy Chief Minister were present at the event.
- 5. Over 120 people suffered heat stress, with 13 deaths and 18 hospitalizations.
- 6. The government's lack of preparedness and systematic planning contributed to the tragedy.
- 7. People scrambled to bring drinking water and medical assistance to those in distress.
- 8. The area lacked a local India Meteorological Department station to issue heat alerts.
- 9. The absence of weather stations in many places highlights the broader issue of climate-related injustice.
- 10. Imbalanced relationships between people and their leaders contribute to the persistence of these injustices.
- 11. Heat action plans and heat alerts are of limited benefit in addressing these underlying issues.
- 12. India must work towards climate literacy, enabling individuals to understand and mitigate the risks of extreme heat.
- 13. Access to cool and clean drinking water, ventilated shelter, lodging, and affordable emergency medical care is essential.
- 14. Preparedness for heatwaves shares similarities with the COVID-19 pandemic and other national crises.
- 15. Governments must eliminate conditions that deny people the means to prepare for and deal with crises.

Practice Exercise

1. What was the main issue with the event held in Navi Mumbai on April 16? [Editorial Page]

- A. The event was poorly attended.
- B. There was a lack of meteorological stations in the area.
- C. The event lacked a systematic plan for dealing with heat stress.
- D. The event was held indoors with poor ventilation.
- 2. What is the fundamental cause of climate-related injustice mentioned in the passage?
 - A. The lack of heat action plans and heat alerts.
 - B. The persistence of conditions where some people are at the mercy of their employers or leaders.
 - C. The absence of India Meteorological Department stations in many areas.
 - D. The lack of climate education among the general population.
- 3. Which of the following is essential for individuals in India to be equipped with in order to respond effectively to climate change and national crises?
 - A. Climate-literacy and access to cool, clean drinking water
 - B. A government that creates conditions for crises
 - C. Access to affordable emergency medical care only
 - D. Higher temperature and higher relative humidity
- 4. What is the tone of the passage regarding the government's handling of the heatwave incident in Maharashtra?
 - A. Praiseworthy
 - B. Neutral
 - C. Critical
 - D. Indifferent
- 5. What is the main theme of the passage?
 - A. The need for more meteorological stations in India
 - B. The importance of heat action plans and heat alerts
 - C. Governments' responsibility to prepare people for extreme weather events
 - D. The rapid onset of India's heat crisis
- 6. Choose the synonym for the word "**unpreparedness**" from the given options.
 - A. Readiness
 - B. Disorganization
 - C. Preparedness
 - D. Orderliness
- 7. Choose the synonym for the word "resourcefulness" from the given options.
 - A. Ingenuity
 - B. Impracticality
 - C. Inefficiency

- D. Helplessness
- 8. Choose the antonym for the word "elusive" from the given options.
 - A. Attainable
 - B. Obscure
 - C. Ambiguous
 - D. Vague
- 9. Choose the antonym for the word "imbalance" from the given options.
 - A. Equality
 - B. Disparity
 - C. Inequality
 - D. Disproportion

10. Choose the idiom that best represents the idea of someone being unfairly exposed to dangers or difficulties due to the negligence of others.

- A. Barking up the wrong tree
- B. A drop in the bucket
- C. A piece of cake
- D. At the mercy of
- 11. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.
 - **P.** Last week, the US Federal Reserve raised the benchmark federal funds rate by 75 basis points for the third straight time.
 - **Q.** While this was expected, the tone of the policy was markedly hawkish as the Fed sought to underline its commitment to tackle inflation, which remains well above target.
 - **R.** This unexpectedly hawkish commentary roiled global markets.
 - **S.** The central bank signalled significantly higher rates than was widely anticipated, dousing expectations of policy rates being eased next year.
 - A. SPQR B.PQSR C.RPSQ D.SPRQ
- 12. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.
 - **P.** Insight, more often than not, can be gained with just a slight shift in perspective.
 - **Q.** That's what artist Tomas Saraceno seems to be advocating, and he has managed to get at least for some months the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam to go along.
 - **R.** For the last three months, the museum which houses works from such greats as Rembrandt and Vermeer will place on the same pedestal as human artists the creative endeavours of creepy crawlies.
 - **S.** At Saraceno's request, no spider webs have been cleaned up by the custodial staff and the curators are looking at natural spun thread as works of art.
 - A. PQRS B.PQSR C.RPSQ D.SPRQ

13. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.

P. When Jhulan Goswami started playing the game, women's cricket in India was sleepwalking at night, mired in indifference.

- **Q.** There's a line in a Rabindra Sangeet which, if loosely translated into English, asks a daytripper to think about the person who walked through a broken path in the night with a lamp in his/her hand.
- **R.** There was a time when a former BCCI president didn't react too kindly to a query from a former Indian women's team captain about the roadmap for women's cricket in the country.
- **S.** Two decades down the line, when India and England cricketers lined up to form a guard of honour in her final game at Lord's on Saturday, the picture looked rosy.

A. PQRS B.QPSR C.QSRP D.SPRQ

14. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.

- P. Towards the end of his life, in the 1950s, when US's relationship with Cuba was fast deteriorating, Hemingway was known to have worried about the cache of manuscripts he had left behind in a bank vault in Cuba and could no longer access because of the political crisis.
- **Q.** Years later, they would be retrieved and form a part of the Ernest Hemingway Collection at Boston's John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.
- **R.** In December 1922, during his Paris years, his first wife Hadley Richardson had inadvertently lost a suitcase full of manuscripts at the Gare de Lyon railway station.
- S. Things lost had a way of upending the life of American Nobel laureate Ernest Hemingway.
 A. SRPQ
 B.QPSR
 C.SRQP
 D.SPRQ

15. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.

- P. Yet, if a machine can mimic the myriad ways in which human beings laugh, it may finally be able to cross the Uncanny Valley that eerie feeling of uneasiness when an AI-enabled creature can copy human behaviour, but somehow feels unnatural and alien in interactions.
- **Q.** There's a new chapter in the saga of over-enthusiastic researchers trying to make the Matrix a reality.
- **R.** This is, of course, a difficult project one that could take decades to become a true success.
- **S.** Scientists at Kyoto University are training an AI-powered robot to laugh.
 - A. QRSP B.QPSR C.QSRP D.SPRQ

Comprehension

The invention of the office - from the Latin opus (work) + facere (do) = officium (performance of work) - was necessitated by the inability of work to be done remotely. Until very recently, the

_____1 ____ technology was simply not available or very limited to allow work away from office.

If you had to conduct stocktaking, copy documents or engage in a brainstorming session, one had to be physically close to the tools of work and co-workers. Even as the technology was becoming increasingly available, it was the forced disruption of a pandemic that finally showed that office,

like the stock exchange trading floor, as a shared physical-only space was no longer essential to carry out work. Today, as Covid restrictions thankfully _____2 ____, the push that had become the shove of working from home (WFH) is becoming a _____3 ____ for working from anywhere (WFA).Neither can all work be conducted WFA nor do all workers prefer remote working. Several reasons for the primacy of the 'face-to-face' work model are trotted out - 'water-cooler' engagements; ideas flying 'better' at _____4 ____ attended meeting; company values

5_____ only under 'one roof, one team' norms.

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

16. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank ${\bf 1}$

- A. Rampant
- B. Prudent
- C. Prevalent
- D. Deterrent

17. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2

- A. Recede
- B. Evade
- C. Initiate
- D. Evolve

18. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3

- A. Patronage
- B. Nudge
- C. Outrage
- D. Privilege

19. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4

- A. Categorically
- B. Ecologically
- C. Corporeally
- D. Stability

20. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 5

- A. Uphold
- B. Welded
- C. Hold
- D. Contend

Find out the error, if any:

21. Unless aid arrives (A)/ within the next few weeks (B)/ thousands are starving. (C)/ No Error (D)

22. I have been (A)/ working in this organisation (B)/ since three years. (C)/ No Error. (D)

23. Neither of the two (A)/ candidates have (B)/ paid his subscription. (C)/ No Error (D)

Direction (Q24 – Q25): Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words/phrase.

24. One who does not follow the usual rules of social life

- A. Propriety
- B. Bohemian
- C. Evasive
- D. Obsolete

25. Unlikely chance occurrence, especially a surprising piece of luck

- A. Fluke
- B. Culpable
- C. Evanescent
- D. Dynasty

Answers

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

Explanations

- C) The passage states that more than 120 people suffered from heat stress, with 13 deaths and 18 hospitalizations, during an event in Navi Mumbai. The issue was attributed to the absence of a systematic plan that accounted for predictable heat-related problems, rather than the lack of meteorological stations in the area.
- 2. B) The passage identifies the fundamental cause of climate-related injustice as the persistence of conditions in which some people are dependent on their employers or leaders for survival during extreme weather events, such as the Navi Mumbai incident. It argues that heat action plans and heat alerts can only be of limited benefit in such conditions and emphasizes the need for empowering individuals with climate literacy and access to essential resources.
- 3. A) According to the passage, India needs to work towards a situation where every individual is equipped with climate-literacy and has the ability to access cool and clean drinking water, ventilated shelter and lodging, and affordable emergency medical care. These requirements are similar to those needed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and most national crises. The passage states that governments should destroy conditions in which people are denied the means to prepare for a crisis, not create them. Therefore, the correct answer is A. Climate-literacy and access to cool, clean drinking water.
- 4. C) The passage is critical of the government's handling of the heatwave incident, as it highlights the lack of preparedness and emphasizes the responsibility of the government to manage foreseeable events like this. The author also points out that the government created conditions where people were denied the means to prepare themselves for a crisis.
- 5. C) The main theme of the passage is the responsibility of the government to prepare people for extreme weather events like heatwaves. The author emphasizes that the government should work towards equipping every individual with climate-literacy and access to basic necessities to ensure their safety during such events. The passage also highlights the tragic unpreparedness in the Maharashtra heatwave incident as an example of the government's failure in this regard.
- 6. B. Disorganization

Explanation: Unpreparedness refers to the state of not being ready or adequately prepared for something. Disorganization is the closest synonym, as it also refers to a lack of proper planning and arrangement.

7. A. Ingenuity

Explanation: Resourcefulness refers to the ability to find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties. Ingenuity is a synonym, as it also means the quality of being inventive or resourceful.

8. A. Attainable

Explanation: Elusive means difficult to find, catch, or achieve. Attainable is an antonym, as it refers to something that can be achieved or obtained.

9. A. Equality

Explanation: Imbalance refers to a lack of equality or evenness between things. Equality is the opposite, as it means the state of being equal in status, rights, or opportunities.

10. D) The idiom "at the mercy of" means being completely under the control of someone or something, often in a vulnerable or helpless situation. In the context of the passage, people being at the mercy of their employers or leaders are unfairly exposed to the dangers of extreme heat events due to a lack of proper preparation and resources.

11. **PQSR**

Last week, the US Federal Reserve raised the benchmark federal funds rate by 75 basis points for the third straight time. While this was expected, the tone of the policy was markedly hawkish as the Fed sought to underline its commitment to tackle inflation, which remains well above target. The central bank signalled significantly higher rates than was widely anticipated, dousing expectations of policy rates being eased next year. This unexpectedly hawkish commentary roiled global markets.

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retrieved and form a part of the Ernest Hemingway Collection at Boston's John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

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There's a new chapter in the saga of over-enthusiastic researchers trying to make the Matrix a reality. Scientists at Kyoto University are training an AI-powered robot to laugh. This is, of course, a difficult project — one that could take decades to become a true success. Yet, if a machine can mimic the myriad ways in which human beings laugh, it may finally be able to cross the Uncanny Valley — that eerie feeling of uneasiness when an AI-enabled creature can copy human behaviour, but somehow feels unnatural and alien in interactions.

16. Prevalent (adjective) – widespread, prevailing, frequent, usual, common प्रचलित

- Rampant (adjective) Uncontrolled, unrestrained, unchecked, unbridled, अनियंत्रित
- Prudent (adjective) cautious, careful, judicious, wise, sensible विवेकपूर्ण, बुद्धिमान, दूरदर्शी
- Deterrent (adjective) preventive, hindering, discouraging, dissuasive निवारक

17. Recede (verb) – diminish, lessen, grow less, decrease, dwindle, fade कम होना

- Evade (verb) avoid, dodge, elude, escape, sidestep टालना/ बचना
- Initiate (verb) start, begin, launch, inaugurate, commence शुरू करना
- Evolve (verb) develop, advance, grow, mature, progress विकसित होना

18. Nudge (noun) – prompt, prompting, push, prod, encouragement उत्तेजना/ प्रोत्साहन

- Patronage (noun) support, backing, protection. संरक्षण
- Outrage (noun) Indignation, anger, rage, ire, resentment आक्रोश
- Privilege (noun) the special right विशेषाधिकार

19. Corporeally (adverb) – in a way that is physical and not spiritual: शारीरिक रूप से

- Categorically (adverb) In a way that is unambiguously explicit and direct. स्पष्ट रूप से
- Ecologically (adverb) in a way that relates to ecology or the environment पारिस्थितिकी
- Stability (noun) permanence, constancy, balance, solidity, firmness स्थिरता

20. Weld (verb) – fuse, unite, bond, connect, stick, join, link, attach बांधना, जोड़ना

- Uphold (verb) support, endorse, sustain, defend, back बरकरार रखना
- Hold (verb) rule, to decide legally निर्णय करना/मानना
- Contend (verb) claim, assert, argue, maintain, allege तर्क देना, दावा करना

- 21. (C) 'are starving' के बदले 'will starve' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'unless' वाले Clause में Present की condition है जिसका future में असर होगा; अर्थात् बनावट 'Unless + Simple Present + Simple Future' पर आधारित होगा; जैसे
 - i. Unless you work hard, you will not succeed.

(C) 'will starve' will be used instead of 'are starving' because in the clause of 'unless' there is a condition of present which will have effect in future; That is, the formulation will be based on 'Unless + Simple Present + Simple Future'; As-

- i. Unless you work hard, you will not succeed.
- 22. (C) 'since' के बदले 'for' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'since' का प्रयोग 'से' के अर्थ में Point of Time के पहले

होता है जबकि 'for' का Period of Time के पहले; जैसे-

- i. I have been living here since 2011.
- ii. He has been living here for three years.
- (C) 'for' will be used instead of 'since' because 'since' is used in the sense of 'since' before Point of Time while 'for' before Period of Time; As
 - i. I have been living here since 2011.
 - ii. He has been living here for three years.
- 23. (B) 'have' के बदले 'has' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'Neither of Either of/ Each of/ One of/ Every one
 - of/ Any one of' के बाद Plural Noun या Pronoun का प्रयोग होता है किन्तु Singular Verb का; जैसे
 - iii. Neither of these boys is intelligent.
 - iv. One of them is not laborious.
 - (B) 'has' will be used instead of 'have' because 'Neither of Either of/ Each of/ One of/ Every one of/ Any one of' is followed by Plural Noun or Pronoun but Singular Verb Of; As
 - i. Neither of these boys is intelligent.
 - ii. One of them is not laborious.
- 24. Bohemian One who does not follow the usual rules of social life रूढ़िम्क्त
 - > Propriety State of being correct in behavior or moral औचित्य
 - Evasive One who does not take definite stand टाल-मटूल करनेवाला
 - Obsolete No longer in use अप्रचलित
- 25. Fluke Unlikely chance occurrence, especially a surprising piece of luck आकस्मिक लाभ
 - Culpable Deserving blame दोषी
 - Evanescent Of a very short duration or period /ephemeral /transient क्षणभंग्र
 - Dynasty Succession of rulers belonging to one family राजवंश



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