

## Of hope and vigilance: announcement that the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a global health emergency

The World Health Organization's announcement gives hope, but there is a message of **caution**

The world's **lived experience** with pandemics has **conferred** it with the **certitude** that **epidemics wane** to **die down**, or transform into seasonal **outbreaks**; COVID-19 is no exception. The World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, last week declared, on the basis of advice from the emergency committee (comprising independent experts), that the COVID-19 pandemic was no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. After over three years, he was **reading down** an emergency that he first announced on January 30, 2020, forced by a rapidly spreading infection that moved from China to 20 other nations across the world. Dr. Tedros **notably invoked** hope when he declared that COVID-19 was over as a global health emergency, but followed it up with a **rider**: it did not mean COVID-19 was no longer a global health threat. Over the months **leading up to** the announcement, **various experts** with WHO **were laying the ground**, **urging** that it was time to treat COVID quite like seasonal influenza. For a world **fatigued** by great loss, human and otherwise, caused by the COVID pandemic, and **exhaustively on guard**, the DG's announcement **brought** a collective **sigh of relief**.

However, **the task** now for WHO and nations **is** to ensure that this announcement is not selectively received, to prevent the world from slipping into a **torpor** of **complacency**. For, COVID is not over — multiple **variants** and sub variants continue to **emerge** regularly, and it has not yet **settled into** a seasonal pattern that one can read, or prevent. At any point of time, it is possible that a new variant, or **recombinant** may **lead to** rapid **transmission** and cause severe disease, **resulting in hospitalisations** and even higher **mortality rates**. As global health experts continue to **insist**: for health systems, **eternal vigilance** is essential, to maintain a level of care and periodically test their capacity to respond to epidemic situations. The impressive **network** of INSACOG laboratories capable of **genetic sequencing** and even routine health infrastructure built up during the COVID years **must** be utilised well. It is also important to not **take the foot off the pedal** in terms of research and development into vaccine platforms, drug delivery systems, anti virals, and antibiotics. This will enable nations to be prepared and on guard not just for COVID-19 but also other emerging infections. At a personal level, individuals will benefit from following the hygiene and precautions that became a habit during the COVID years, particularly **adhering to** the vaccination schedule, and following hand hygiene and **masking** under certain circumstances.

[Practice Exercise]

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

## Vocabulary

1. **Vigilance** (noun) – Watchfulness, care, attentiveness, caution, observance सतर्कता
2. **Caution** (noun) – Prudence, wariness, carefulness, circumspection, mindfulness सावधानी
3. **Lived experience** (noun) – Personal experience, firsthand knowledge, real-life encounters, individual history, personal reality व्यक्तिगत अनुभव
4. **Confer** (verb) – Grant, bestow, award, present, accord प्रदान करना
5. **Certitude** (noun) – Certainty, assurance, conviction, confidence, sureness निश्चितता
6. **Epidemic** (noun) – Outbreak, plague, upsurge, widespread disease, pandemic महामारी
7. **Wane** (verb) – Diminish, decline, decrease, lessen, fade कम होना
8. **Die down** (phrasal verb) – Subside, abate, lessen, diminish, dwindle धीमा होना
9. **Outbreak** (noun) – Eruption, flare-up, sudden increase, explosion, upsurge प्रकोप
10. **Read down** (phrasal verb) – Interpret, construe, explain, clarify, understand समझाना
11. **Notably** (adverb) – Particularly, especially, markedly, prominently, significantly विशेष रूप से
12. **Invoke** (verb) – Call upon, appeal to, refer to, resort to, solicit इस्तेमाल करना
13. **Rider** (noun) – Condition, provision, stipulation, qualification, restriction शर्त
14. **Lead up to** (phrase) – Precede, come before, pave the way, prepare for, approach पहले होना
15. **Lay the ground** (phrase) – Prepare, set the stage, make ready, arrange, establish नींव रखना
16. **Urge** (verb) – Advise, recommend, insist on, support अनुरोध करना
17. **Fatigue** (verb) – Exhaust, tire, weary, wear out, enervate थकाना
18. **Exhaustively** (adverb) – Thoroughly, comprehensively, completely, extensively, in-depth पूरी तरह से
19. **On guard** (phrase) – Watchful, alert, vigilant, attentive, cautious सतर्क
20. **Bring a sigh of relief** (phrase) – Ease, lessen worry, alleviate stress, bring comfort, lighten the burden राहत की सांस लेना

21. **Torpor** (noun) – Lethargy, sluggishness, inertia, inactivity, listlessness सुस्ती
22. **Complacence** (noun) – Self-satisfaction, smugness, self-approval, self-admiration, self-regard आत्मसंतोष
23. **Variant** (noun) – Variation, form, version, alternative, modification प्रकार
24. **Emerge** (verb) – Arise, appear, come forth, surface, materialize उभरना
25. **Settle into** (phrasal verb) – Adapt, adjust, become accustomed, acclimate, get used to अनुकूल बनना
26. **Recombinant** (noun) – Hybrid, combination, fusion, amalgamation, blend; a recombinant organism, cell, or piece of genetic material. पुनः संयोजक
27. **Lead** (to) (verb) – Cause, bring about, give rise to, produce, generate वजह बनना
28. **Transmission** (noun) – Spread, dissemination, distribution, transfer, conveyance प्रसार
29. **Result in** (phrasal verb) – Lead to, cause, bring about, provoke, create परिणाम होना
30. **Hospitalisation** (noun) – Admission, admittance, inpatient care, confinement, treatment अस्पताल में भर्ती
31. **Mortality rate** (noun) – Death rate, fatality rate, number of deaths, casualty rate, fatality ratio मृत्यु दर
32. **Insist** (verb) – Maintain, assert, emphasize, stress, declare आग्रह करना
33. **Eternal** (adjective) – Everlasting, endless, perpetual, unending, ceaseless अनन्त
34. **Vigilance** (noun) – Alertness, wariness, mindfulness, circumspection, prudence सतर्कता
35. **Genetic sequencing** (noun) – the process of determining the nucleic acid sequence – the order of nucleotides in DNA. It includes any method or technology that is used to determine the order of the four bases: adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine.
36. **Take the foot off the pedal** (phrase) – make less effort and start to relax.
37. **Adhere** (to) (verb) – Follow, abide by, comply with, conform to, obey पालन करना
38. **Mask** (verb) – Cover, shield, protect, conceal, मास्क पहनना

## Summary of the Editorial

1. The WHO declared COVID-19 is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
2. The announcement was based on advice from an emergency committee of independent experts.
3. COVID-19 still remains a global health threat.
4. Experts have urged treating COVID like seasonal influenza.
5. The announcement brought relief to a world fatigued by the pandemic's losses.
6. WHO and nations must prevent complacency and selective reception of the announcement.
7. COVID is not over, as multiple variants and sub-variants continue to emerge.
8. A new variant may cause rapid transmission, severe disease, and increased mortality rates.
9. Health systems must maintain eternal vigilance and test their capacity to respond to epidemic situations.
10. The INSACOG laboratory network and health infrastructure built during the pandemic should be well-utilized.
11. Continued research and development into vaccines, drug delivery systems, antivirals, and antibiotics is crucial.
12. Nations must be prepared for COVID-19 and other emerging infections.
13. Individuals should continue following hygiene and precautions developed during the pandemic.
14. Adherence to vaccination schedules, hand hygiene, and masking under certain circumstances is important.
15. The WHO's announcement brings hope but also emphasizes the need for continued vigilance.

### SSC Based: Practice Exercise

1. Which of the following statements is **INCORRECT** based on the given passage? **[Editorial]**
  - A. The World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General declared that the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
  - B. COVID-19 will disappear completely and will not pose any further global health threat.
  - C. The WHO's announcement provides hope but also contains a message of caution.
  - D. COVID-19 can be treated like seasonal influenza in terms of its management.
2. **What did the Director-General of WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, say about COVID-19 pandemic in his recent announcement?**
  - A. COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a global health threat
  - B. COVID-19 pandemic is over
  - C. COVID-19 pandemic is still a global health threat
  - D. COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern
3. **Which idiom best describes the WHO's announcement that the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a global health emergency?**
  - A. A blessing in disguise
  - B. A drop in the bucket
  - C. A silver lining
  - D. A bitter pill to swallow
4. **What is the message of caution that comes with the World Health Organization's announcement that the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a global health emergency?**
  - A. COVID-19 is no longer a threat and we can stop taking precautions
  - B. There is no need to worry about new variants or emerging infections
  - C. It is important to remain vigilant and not become complacent
  - D. The pandemic is completely over and there is no need to prepare for future outbreaks
5. **According to the passage, Which of the following are/is true about the COVID-19 pandemic**
  - i. The World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern
  - ii. The COVID-19 pandemic is not yet settled into a seasonal pattern that one can read, or prevent
  - iii. Multiple variants and sub variants of COVID-19 continue to emerge regularly
  - iv. The announcement that COVID-19 is no longer a global health emergency means that COVID-19 is no longer a global health threat.
    - A. Only i
    - B. Only iii
    - C. Both I and ii
    - D. I, ii, iii
6. **What is the tone of the passage?**
  - A. Negative
  - B. Positive
  - C. Neutral

D. Sarcastic

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

- A. The COVID-19 pandemic is over.
- B. The COVID-19 pandemic is still a global health threat.
- C. The need for caution and vigilance in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- D. The importance of following hygiene and precautions.

**8. Which word is a synonym of "certitude" as used in the passage?**

- A. Uncertainty
- B. Doubt
- C. Confidence
- D. Hesitation

**9. Which word is a synonym for "torpor" as used in the passage?**

- A. Energy
- B. Lethargy
- C. Excitement
- D. Alertness

**10. Which word is an antonym of "complacency" as used in the passage?**

- A. Satisfaction
- B. Contentment
- C. Alertness
- D. Self-congratulation

**Comprehension**

The Supreme Court has given a timely reminder to Governors that the Constitution expects that a decision to return a Bill to the State Assembly for reconsideration should be made "as soon as possible". It has drawn attention to the phrase found in the first proviso to Article 200, seeking to convey a sense of immediacy in the matter of returning a Bill. "The expression 'as soon as possible' contains significant constitutional content and \_\_\_\_\_1\_\_\_\_\_ be borne in mind by constitutional authorities," the Court observed. This effectively means it would be constitutionally impermissible for Governors to hold on \_\_\_\_\_2\_\_\_\_\_ Bills indefinitely without communicating their decision to the House. The Telangana Governor, Dr. Tamilsai Soundararajan, against whose \_\_\_\_\_3\_\_\_\_\_ inaction on several Bills the State had approached the Court, communicated to the Court that no Bills were pending with her, and that she had returned two Bills for reconsideration, while seeking further information from the government on a few others. Based on this, the Court \_\_\_\_\_4\_\_\_\_\_ of the petition, but kept open questions that arose from the issue for consideration in an appropriate case. The Court's observation addresses the issue of delay, but it is only one aspect of the controversy. The issue of granting assent is seen in most parliamentary democracies as a formality, but the \_\_\_\_\_5\_\_\_\_\_ discretionary powers with which Governors are clothed in India have given much scope for controversy

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

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

- A. May  
B. Must  
C. Can  
D. Could
12. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2.**  
A. To  
B. With  
C. In  
D. By
13. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3.**  
A. Assent  
B. Abundant  
C. Apparent  
D. Consent
14. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4.**  
A. Premised  
B. Exercised  
C. Criticised  
D. Disposed
15. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 5.**  
A. Secular  
B. Peculiar  
C. Bear  
D. Appear
16. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**  
P. It was 9 pm, December 31, 2016.  
Q. FOR the past several decades, every New Year's Eve, my wife Usha and I have been taking a few hundred blankets and quietly covering people sleeping in shop corridors, railway platforms or under the trees at night.  
R. Usha and I were in front of a jhuggi in the Saketri slums of Panchkula  
S. Five kids aged between 3 and 12 years were standing outside, shivering and hungry.  
A. SPQR                      B.QRPS                      C.QPRS                      D.PRQS
17. **Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words.**  
A person, plant or animal who/which is below the usual size  
A. Reformatory  
B. Addicted  
C. Dwarf  
D. Nomenclature
18. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**  
P. This was something that would allow her to embrace all the challenges that sprung up during her tiresome journeys while scaling some of the highest mountains of the world

- Q. Manali's Mt Deo Tibba look as if they were painted with colours of gold — it was a moment of everlasting love, deeply entrenched in her psyche
- R. Baljeet Kaur's eyes light up every time you ask about her very first expedition.
- S. She vividly remembers the day when she first saw the sun peep through the peaks to make the surroundings of.

A. RSQP      B.QPSR      C.RSPQ      D.SPRQ

19. Identify the **INCORRECTLY** spelt word in the given sentence

Having taken to the trek without supplemental oxygen in the afternoon, it was always going to be a tough climb to the 8,091-metre peak.

- A. Disheveled  
B. Appearance  
C. Belied  
D. Treak

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

- P. There are no pre-payments involved and it is easy for the tourists to call off their pre-fixed tour or skip Amritsar.
- Q. The second blast on Heritage Street near the Golden Temple in the city on Monday morning has caused panic among hoteliers, travel and tour operators besides those who earn their livelihood through tourism.
- R. Though it is an off season, players in the hospitality industry fear that it may cast a shadow on the peak tourist season, commencing with summer vacation.
- S. Most of the room bookings are made online.

A. SRPQ      B.QRSP      C.SRQP      D.SPRQ



## Answers

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

## Explanations

- B) COVID-19 will disappear completely and will not pose any further global health threat.**  
 This statement is incorrect based on the given passage. Although the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General declared that the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, he also stated that it did not mean COVID-19 was no longer a global health threat. The passage mentions that COVID-19 is no exception to the fact that epidemics eventually die down or transform into seasonal outbreaks. Furthermore, the passage suggests that various experts with WHO were urging that it was time to treat COVID quite like seasonal influenza, implying that it will continue to pose a global health threat but can be managed similarly to influenza. Therefore, option B is incorrect.
- D) COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern**  
 The passage states that the Director-General of WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, announced that the COVID-19 pandemic was no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. It is important to read the passage carefully to identify the correct answer. Option A is incorrect because the Director-General did not say that COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a global health threat. Option B is incorrect because although the Director-General invoked hope, he did not say that the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Option C is incorrect because the Director-General did not say that COVID-19 pandemic is still a global health threat.
- C) A silver lining – ray of hope, positive side, glimmer of hope उम्मीद की किरण**  
 A silver lining refers to a positive aspect of a difficult or negative situation. In this editorial, the announcement by the WHO that COVID-19 is no longer a global health emergency is seen as a silver lining, giving hope to people around the world who have been affected by the pandemic.
- C.) It is important to remain vigilant and not become complacent.**  
 The passage explains that while the announcement by the World Health Organization gives hope, it is important to be cautious and not become complacent. The author explains that new variants and sub-variants of the virus continue to emerge regularly, and it is important to maintain eternal vigilance to prevent the world from slipping into a torpor of complacency. Therefore, the correct answer is C.
- D) I, ii, iii are true**  
 The passage states that the announcement by the WHO Director-General that COVID-19 is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern brought a collective sigh of relief but also cautioned that it did not mean COVID-19 was no longer a global health threat. Therefore, option D is incorrect. Options i, ii, and iii are all true according to the passage.
- B) Positive**

The passage starts with a positive note, stating that the World Health Organization's announcement gives hope. The author also acknowledges the world's experience with pandemics, which has conferred it with the certitude that epidemics wane to die down. However, the author also warns about the need for caution and vigilance. The passage ends with a positive note, stating that individuals will benefit from following the hygiene and precautions that became a habit during the COVID years.

7. **C) The need for caution and vigilance in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The main theme of the passage is the need for caution and vigilance in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 was no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, the author warns that COVID-19 is not over, and there is a need for eternal vigilance to prevent the world from slipping into a torpor of complacency.

8. **C. Confidence**

**Certitude** (noun) – conviction, confidence, sureness, certainty, assurance विश्वास/ निश्चितता  
In the passage, "certitude" refers to the conviction that epidemics will eventually die down or transform into seasonal outbreaks. The synonym for certitude in this context is "confidence".

9. **B.) Lethargy**

**Torpor** (noun) – a state of physical or mental inactivity; lethargy. निष्क्रियता की स्थिति; सुस्ती  
The passage mentions that the world should not slip into a "torpor of complacency" after the announcement. In this context, "torpor" means a state of inactivity or lethargy.

10. **C.) Alertness**

**Complacency** (noun) – Self-satisfaction, smugness, self-content, self-approval आत्मसंतुष्टि  
"Complacency" means being self-satisfied and unconcerned about potential dangers. Its antonym is "alertness," which implies being watchful and ready for action.

11. The most appropriate option to fill in blank 1 is B. Must.

The word "**must**" indicates that this is an obligation or requirement for constitutional authorities, which fits the context better than the other options that suggest possibility or ability.

12. **Hold on to** (phrase) – Retain, keep, maintain, preserve, cling to रखना

In the context of the sentence, it is clear that the blank is meant to convey the idea of Governors holding on to Bills without communicating their decision. The correct option in this case is 'to,' which indicates that the action of holding on is directed towards the Bills.

B. Some - '**Some**' is an adjective used to indicate an unspecified number or amount,

C. In - '**In**' is a preposition that typically indicates location, direction, or time.

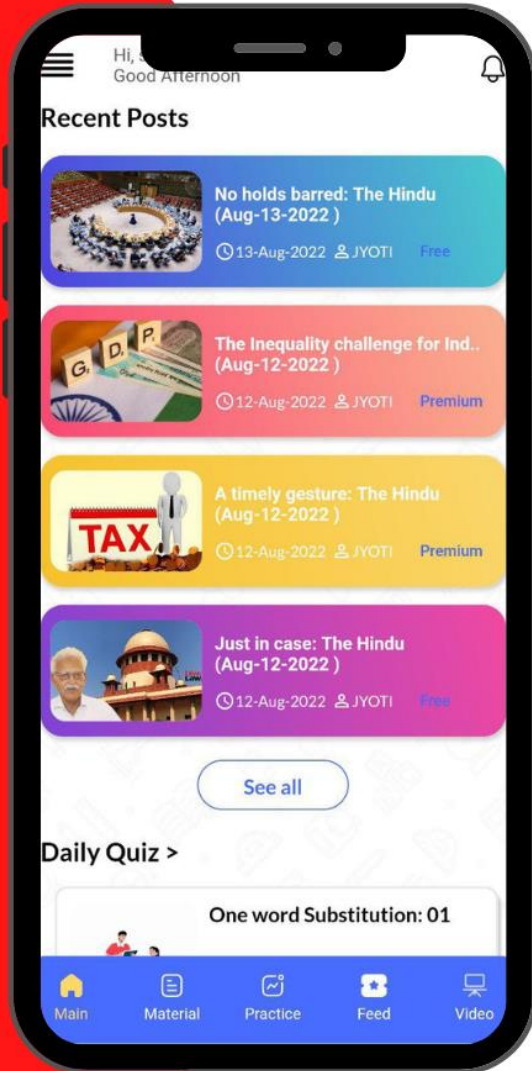
D. By - '**By**' is a preposition that can indicate agency, method, or extent

13. **Apparent** (adjective) – Evident, clear, obvious, manifest, noticeable प्रत्यक्ष/ स्पष्ट

- **Assent** (noun) – Agreement, approval, consent, concurrence, endorsement सहमति

- **Abundant** (adjective) – Plentiful, ample, copious, profuse प्रचुर
  - **Consent** (noun) – agreement, assent, concurrence, accord सहमति
14. **Dispose** (of) (verb) – discard, get rid of, dispense with, clear out का निपटारा करना
- **Premise** (on) (verb) – base, found, establish, ground, rest (on) पर आधारित होना
  - **Exercise** (verb) – Carry out, perform, implement, apply प्रयोग करना
  - **Criticise** (verb) – condemn, denounce, disapprove आलोचना करना
15. **Peculiar** (adjective) – Strange, unusual, uncommon, abnormal, atypical अजीब
- **Secular** (adjective) – non-religious, non-sectarian, worldly धर्मनिरपेक्ष
  - **Bear** (verb) – Carry, shoulder, support, sustain, endure सहना, संभालना
  - **Appear** (verb) – Seem, look, emerge, materialize, come into view लगना
16. **QPRS**  
FOR the past several decades, every New Year’s Eve, my wife Usha and I have been taking a few hundred blankets and quietly covering people sleeping in shop corridors, railway platforms or under the trees at night. It was 9 pm, December 31, 2016. Usha and I were in front of a jhuggi in the Saketri slums of Panchkula. Five kids aged between 3 and 12 years were standing outside, shivering and hungry.
17. **Dwarf** – A person, plant or animal who/which is below the usual size बौना
- **Reformatory** – An institution for reforming young offenders बाल सुधार
  - **Addicted** – One who has become dependent on something or drugs आदी
  - **Nomenclature** – A system of naming things नामकरण
18. **RSQP**  
Baljeet Kaur’s eyes light up every time you ask about her very first expedition. She vividly remembers the day when she first saw the sun peep through the peaks to make the surroundings of Manali’s Mt Deo Tibba look as if they were painted with colours of gold — it was a moment of everlasting love, deeply entrenched in her psyche. This was something that would allow her to embrace all the challenges that sprung up during her tiresome journeys while scaling some of the highest mountains of the world
19. The correct spelling is “trek” which means a long arduous journey, especially one made on foot.
20. **QRSP**  
The second blast on Heritage Street near the Golden Temple in the city on Monday morning has caused panic among hoteliers, travel and tour operators besides those who earn their livelihood through tourism. Though it is an off season, players in the hospitality industry fear that it may cast a shadow on the peak tourist season, commencing with summer

vacation. Most of the room bookings are made online. There are no pre-payments involved and it is easy for the tourists to call off their pre-fixed tour or skip Amritsar.



# Learn Vocabulary Through Reading Articles

English Madhyam

