

Rain fury & roads

THERE has been a **clamour** for a **relook** at the highway construction policies in the hill states **following** the **widespread destruction** of roads and bridges during the monsoon. The **decision** of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to appoint an expert committee **is recognition** of the need to consider alternatives. **Having** concrete roads, which are more **resistant** to heavy rain and floods than those made of **asphalt** but costlier, **is** being viewed as a possible option. The National Highways Authority of India will have a **dedicated** section to **explore** the plan. The **collaboration** with IITs can be made more meaningful if the scientists are given a **free hand** to come up with solutions of their own.

One can only **endorse** Union Minister Nitin Gadkari's vision of having roads, bridges and tunnels of international standards at places that are **prone** to natural **calamities**. The question is of the long-term **feasibility** of **sanctioning** projects in areas that may not be **conducive** for such activity. **Sustainability concerns** cannot be **overlooked**. Four-laned highways running along **scenic slopes** make for a dream drive, but the consequences of **wanton levelling** of hills and **axing** of trees have to be thought through. For the state governments, the immediate task is to **restore** traffic on the highways. That should be followed by **audits** to find out what went wrong and what **remedial** measures can be initiated.



A **report tabled** in the Lok Sabha **turns** the focus on another key **aspect** of road construction — regular **monitoring**. The Standing Committee on Rural Development has termed 'unacceptable' the compromise on the quality of construction under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. Launched in 2000, the scheme provides all-weather roads to connect rural areas. **Contracts** given at low rates and misuse of the **provision** to **sublet work** **have** been **flagged** as reasons for the poor quality of roads.

[Practice Exercise]

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

Vocabulary

1. **Fury** (noun) – Ferocity, turbulence, intensity, potency, severity प्रकोप
for surfacing roads, flooring, roofing, etc.
डामर
2. **Clamour** (noun) – a strongly expressed protest or demand from a large number of people शोर-शराबे सहित की गई माँग
3. **Relook** (noun) – Reassessment, reexamination, review, revisit, reevaluation पुनरावलोकन
4. **Following** (preposition) – After, subsequent to, ensuing, succeeding, post के बाद
5. **Widespread** (adjective) – General, extensive, prevalent, pervasive, ubiquitous व्यापक
6. **Destruction** (noun) – Annihilation, ruination, devastation, demolition, obliteration विध्वंस
7. **Recognition** (noun) – Acknowledgment, acceptance, appreciation, validation, realization स्वीकृति
8. **Concrete** (noun) – a building material made from a mixture of broken stone or gravel, sand, cement, and water, कंक्रीट
9. **Resistant** (adjective) – Immune, unresponsive, impervious, insusceptible, repellent प्रतिरोधी
10. **Asphalt** (noun) – a mixture of dark bituminous pitch with sand or gravel, used
11. **Dedicated** (adjective) – Committed, devoted, loyal, faithful, staunch समर्पित
12. **Explore** (verb) – Investigate, examine, study, probe, research पता लगाना
13. **Collaboration** (noun) – Cooperation, alliance, partnership, teamwork, association सहयोग
14. **A free hand** (phrase) – freedom to act completely at one's own discretion. आज़ादी देना
15. **Endorse** (verb) – Approve, support, back, advocate, ratify समर्थन करना
16. **Prone** (to) (adjective) – Susceptible, vulnerable, inclined, predisposed संवेदनशील
17. **Calamity** (noun) – Disaster, catastrophe, tragedy, mishap, misfortune आपदा
18. **Feasibility** (noun) – Practicality, viability, possibility, workability, applicability व्यवहार्यता
19. **Sanction** (verb) – Authorize, approve, endorse, permit, allow मंजूरी देना
20. **Conducive** (for) (adjective) – Favorable, beneficial, advantageous, suitable, supportive अनुकूल

21. **Sustainability** (noun) – Endurance, continuity, durability, stability, viability
स्थिरता/ टिकाऊपन
22. **Concern** (noun) – Worry, anxiety, unease, apprehension, distress चिंता
23. **Overlook** (verb) – Miss, ignore, neglect, omit, bypass अनदेखा करना
24. **Scenic** (adjective) – Picturesque, beautiful, lovely, stunning, panoramic दृश्यपूर्ण/
प्राकृतिक
25. **Slope** (noun) – Gradient, incline, slant, tilt, grade ढलान
26. **Wanton** (adjective) – Excessive, unrestrained, heedless, reckless अनियंत्रित
27. **Levelling** (noun) – Flattening, smoothing, steamrolling, press flat समतल बनाना
28. **Axe** (verb) – Cut, chop, slash, eliminate, reduce कटना
29. **Restore** (verb) – Reestablish, reinstate, bring back, revive, rejuvenate पुनः प्रस्थापित करना
30. **Audit** (noun) – Inspection, examination, assessment, appraisal, review लेखा परीक्षण
31. **Remedial** (adjective) – Corrective, restorative, healing, therapeutic, curative उपचारात्मक
32. **Table** (verb) – Present, submit, propose, introduce, put forward प्रस्तुत करना
33. **Aspect** (noun) – Feature, facet, dimension, element, factor पहलु
34. **Monitoring** (noun) – Surveillance, supervision, observation, tracking, overseeing निगरानी
35. **Provision** (noun) – an amount or thing supplied or provided
36. **Sublet work** (noun) – all work to be performed by the Subcontractor
37. **Flag** (verb) – Signal, indicate, point out, mark, highlight चिह्नित करना

Summary of the Editorial

1. There's increasing demand to reevaluate highway construction policies in hilly regions due to monsoon-induced damages.
2. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has decided to appoint an expert committee to study alternatives.
3. Concrete roads, more resistant to heavy rain and floods than asphalt roads, are considered as a potential solution.
4. However, concrete roads are more expensive to construct than asphalt ones.
5. The National Highways Authority of India will establish a dedicated section to study this plan.
6. Collaboration with the IITs is proposed, with the suggestion that scientists be given autonomy to devise their own solutions.
7. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari emphasizes the need for roads, bridges, and tunnels that meet international standards in calamity-prone areas.
8. Concerns arise regarding the viability of sanctioning projects in areas that might not be suitable for such construction.
9. There's a strong emphasis on the importance of sustainability.
10. Four-laned highways along picturesque slopes may be aesthetically pleasing but can lead to environmental issues if not carefully planned.
11. Immediate priority for state governments is restoring traffic flow on damaged highways.
12. Audits are recommended to determine the causes of the damages and possible remedies.
13. A Lok Sabha report highlights the need for regular monitoring of road construction.
14. The Standing Committee on Rural Development criticized compromises on construction quality under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.
15. The scheme, started in 2000 to link rural areas with all-weather roads, has faced challenges like low-rate contracts and subletting that resulted in subpar quality.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **Based on the passage, which of the following statements are/ is true?** [Editorial Page]
- (i) The highway construction policies in the hill states have never faced any criticism.
 - (ii) The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has ignored the need for a relook at the highway construction policies.
 - (iii) Concrete roads are more resistant to heavy rain and floods compared to asphalt roads.
 - (iv) The National Highways Authority of India has rejected the idea of collaborating with IITs.
- A. Both I and ii
 - B. All of the above
 - C. Only i
 - D. Only iii
2. Based on the second paragraph, what does the word "**overlooked**" mean?
- A. Ignored or neglected
 - B. Seen from a high point
 - C. Maintained or repaired
 - D. Analyzed in detail
3. **What is the primary concern highlighted by the author regarding highway construction policies in the hill states?**
- A. The collaboration with IITs in road construction.
 - B. The vision of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari for international standard roads.
 - C. The cost of concrete roads being higher than asphalt roads.
 - D. The consequences of not considering environmental sustainability and the quality of road construction.
4. **What is the author's tone in the passage?**
- A. Indifferent
 - B. Critical
 - C. Optimistic
 - D. Praise-filled
5. **Which of the following statements is an opinion, rather than a fact?**
- A. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways decided to appoint an expert committee.
 - B. The National Highways Authority of India will have a dedicated section to explore the plan.
 - C. One can only endorse Union Minister Nitin Gadkari's vision of having roads, bridges, and tunnels of international standards at places that are prone to natural calamities.
 - D. A report tabled in the Lok Sabha focuses on the aspect of road construction — regular monitoring.
6. **Which of the following best summarizes the third paragraph?**
- A. A report highlights the necessity of monitoring road construction and reveals concerns about the quality of roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.
 - B. There has been a demand to reconsider highway construction policies due to the damage caused by monsoons.

- C. The National Highways Authority of India is exploring the idea of having concrete roads in collaboration with IITs.
- D. Sustainability and feasibility issues arise when sanctioning projects in areas prone to natural disasters, with the impact of altering landscapes also being a concern.
7. **Based on the passage, how does the author most likely feel about the highway construction policies in the hill states?**
- A. They believe the current policies are flawless and effective.
- B. They appreciate the efforts but think more regular monitoring is needed.
- C. They are critical and believe sustainability concerns are often overlooked.
- D. They are neutral and simply reporting the facts.
8. Which of the following words is an antonym for "**contaminated**"?
- A. Tainted
- B. Polluted
- C. Impure
- D. Pure
9. **Select the correct homonym from the given options to fill in the blank**
The magician pulled a rabbit out of his _____.
- A. hat
- B. had
- C. hut
- D. hit
10. **Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words.**
A person who is new to a subject, skill, or belief
- A. Novice
- B. Mentor
- C. Expert
- D. Recluse

Comprehension

In 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the first charter of its kind _____1_____ basic rights to all children below 18 years, with these words: "Mankind owes to the child the best it can give." Yet, as is well-documented, children, because of their vulnerability, often become victims of abuse of power by the very people who are entrusted with their protection. The advancements in digital technologies _____2_____ helped on many fronts, from registration of births, creating a legal identity to health care, but in its forward march, it should not _____3_____ on the rights integral to a _____4_____ upbringing of a child. Leaning on a child's fundamental right to privacy, the Supreme Court of India has ruled that children cannot be mechanically subjected _____5_____ DNA tests in each and every case between warring parents as a shortcut to establishing infidelity.

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

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

- A. Underscore
B. Constraining
C. Claiming
D. Ensuring
12. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2.**
A. Have
B. Has
C. Was
D. Is
13. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3.**
A. Battle
B. Trample
C. Enforce
D. Kindle
14. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4.**
A. Injurious
B. Harmonious
C. Synchronous
D. Laborious
15. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 5.**
A. In
B. By
C. With
D. To
16. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
P. The Supreme Court has rejected the Election Commission's plea to restrain the media from reporting oral remarks made by judges during hearings, saying, 'Citizens have a right to know about what transpires in the course of judicial proceedings.'
Q. It refused to expunge the Madras High Court's observation that the poll panel was responsible for the surge in Covid-19 cases and its officers should be slapped with murder charges, saying that the remarks weren't part of the official judicial record
R. However, it appreciated the poll panel's work, saying,
S. 'The EC has a track record of being an independent constitutional body which shoulders a significant burden in ensuring the sanctity of electoral democracy.'
A. PQRS B. QRPS C. SQPR D. PRQS
17. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
P. While refusing to reconsider the landmark verdict and by quashing the Maharashtra law granting quota to the Maratha community in admissions and government jobs — which allowed it to exceed 60 per cent —
Q. It was in 1992 that a nine-judge Bench of the Supreme Court had drawn the 'Lakshman rekha' for reservation in jobs and education at 50 per cent, except in 'extraordinary circumstances'.

- R. A stern message was delivered that people from the Maratha community cannot be declared as educationally and socially backward to bring them within the reserved category since it would be a violation of not only the due process of law, but also the right to equality.
- S. The apex court has shown the rule book to governments and parties pandering to vote bank interests, and catering to demands that defeat the very purpose of reservation.
A. RSQP B.QPSR C.RSPQ D.SPRQ
- 18. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
- P. Earlier this week, 24 patients, 23 of them Covid-infected, died in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar due to alleged shortage of the life-saving gas in the district hospital.
- Q. Though the Central government claims that there is no shortage of oxygen, the lapses are evident on all counts, be it production, allocation, transportation or supply.
- R. On Saturday, 12 Covid-19 patients, including a senior doctor, succumbed at a private hospital in New Delhi after it reportedly ran out of medical oxygen for more than an hour.
- S. The disruption of oxygen supply is causing deaths almost on a daily basis in the country.
A. SRPQ B.QRSP C.SRQP D.SPRQ
- 19. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
- P. European football has just witnessed the rise and fall of a multi-billion sporting empire — in less than three days.
- Q. The plans to form a league of elite, super-rich clubs who were to be given membership in perpetuity, with no need of qualification or fear of relegation, struck at the principle of sporting meritocracy. It was an attempt at a great heist, and it met with very hostile public opinion.
- R. ESL's base was, it was clear, the greed of the biggest clubs of Europe, except the ones from Germany and France, who didn't join.
- S. The plans to form the breakaway 20-team European Super League (ESL) are in disarray as English and Italian clubs have pulled out of the proposed league. Football leagues in Europe have a rich and cherished history, with fan loyalties going back four or even more generations.
A. QRSP B.PSRQ C.QSRP D.PQSR
- 20. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
- P. Trouble is brewing for tea growers, orchardists and other farmers in rain-deficient Himachal Pradesh as agriculture is largely rain-fed. With over 70 per cent deficiency in rainfall and scanty snow witnessed since January, the farmers are suffering severe crop failure in terms of both quality and quantity.
- Q. In the Kullu valley, the apple producers are worried that owing to the inadequate amount of chilling time, their fruit of labour would be hit. Pear and cherry produce is similarly dependent upon chilling hours.
- R. Farmers in Bilaspur district have also been affected by the drought-like conditions as a 30-40 per cent reduction in wheat yield is feared because the crop is stunted. Cattle are being fed wheat as there is shortage of fodder in some areas. Earlier, the vegetable farmers of Solan faced tough times as their yield was reduced to half.

S. The dry weather has wilted the famous tea leaves in the Kangra valley, impacting the production by a whopping 75 per cent.

A. QRSP

B.QSRP

C.PSQR

D.PRQS

Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

- D) Concrete roads are more resistant to heavy rain and floods compared to asphalt roads. The passage states, "Having concrete roads, which are more resistant to heavy rain and floods than those made of asphalt but costlier, is being viewed as a possible option." This directly supports option iii, confirming that concrete roads are indeed more resistant to heavy rain and floods compared to those made of asphalt.
- A) Ignored or neglected**
 In the context of the second paragraph, "Sustainability concerns cannot be overlooked" suggests that these concerns should not be ignored or neglected while making decisions about road construction. The word "overlooked" in this context does not refer to viewing something from a high point, maintaining or repairing something, or analyzing something in detail. Instead, it emphasizes the importance of not neglecting sustainability concerns.
- D) The consequences of not considering environmental sustainability and the quality of road construction.**
 The passage touches on various aspects related to road construction in hill states, including the materials used, collaboration with academic institutions, and the vision of the Union Minister. However, a recurring theme in the passage is the concern for sustainability and the quality of construction. The author emphasizes the importance of considering the environmental impact of constructing highways, especially in relation to "wanton levelling of hills and axing of trees." Additionally, the latter part of the passage focuses on the compromised quality of road construction under a particular scheme.
- B) Critical**
 The author consistently critiques the current state of highway construction policies, particularly in the hill states. The tone is evident in phrases such as "widespread destruction of roads and bridges," "question is of the long-term feasibility," "consequences of wanton levelling of hills and axing of trees," and the Standing Committee on Rural Development finding the compromise on the quality of construction as "unacceptable."
- C. One can only endorse Union Minister Nitin Gadkari's vision of having roads, bridges, and tunnels of international standards at places that are prone to natural calamities.**
 Options A, B, and D are statements of fact as they describe specific decisions or actions taken by organizations or entities mentioned in the passage. Option C, however, is an opinion because it expresses an endorsement (a form of approval or recommendation) of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari's vision, indicating a subjective perspective rather than a verifiable fact.
- A.) The third paragraph mainly discusses a report presented in the Lok Sabha which emphasizes the importance of regular monitoring in road construction. It also touches upon the concerns related to the quality of roads built under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana due to reasons like low-rate contracts and misuse of subletting provisions. Option A encapsulates these main points and is the best summary of the paragraph in question.

7. C) They are critical and believe sustainability concerns are often overlooked.

From the passage, it can be deduced that the author is critical of the highway construction policies in the hill states. They emphasize the need for reconsideration of these policies, especially after the damages caused during the monsoon. The passage also highlights the importance of sustainability concerns and suggests that the consequences of construction on scenic slopes, levelling hills, and cutting trees should be carefully considered. Phrases such as "Sustainability concerns cannot be overlooked" and mentioning the "consequences of wanton levelling of hills and axing of trees" point towards the author's concerns about overlooking sustainability and environmental factors in the construction process. Hence, option C is the most appropriate choice.

8. D) Pure

Contaminated (adjective) – polluted, tainted, foul, dirty, infected दूषित

9. A. hat

Explanation: In this context, the correct homonym is 'hat.' The sentence refers to a common magic trick where a magician pulls a rabbit out of a hat. The other options, 'had,' 'hut,' and 'hit,' are incorrect because they do not make sense in the context of the sentence

10. A. Novice

- **Novice** – He is a person who is new to a particular field, subject, or activity and has little or no experience or skill in it. नौसिखिया
- **Mentor** – he is an experienced and trusted advisor, शिक्षक
- **Expert** – He is someone who is highly knowledgeable and skilled in a particular area, निपुण
- **Recluse** – He is a person who lives a solitary life and tends to avoid other people. एकांतवासी

11. D) Ensure (verb) – make sure, make certain, see to it सुनिश्चित करना

- **Underscore** (verb) – Emphasize, highlight, stress, accentuate, underline, जोर देना
- **Constrain** (verb) – Compel, force, coerce, press, विवश करना
- **Claim** (verb) – to take lives of someone की जान लेना

12. A) In this context, the subject "**advancements**" is plural, referring to multiple developments or progressions in digital technologies. Therefore, the verb "have" is used because it agrees with the plural subject in number.

13. B) Trample on (verb) – to treat (a person or her rights) with disregard or contempt रौंदना

- **Battle** (verb) – Fight, combat, resist, withstand, stand up to सामना करना
- **Kindle** (verb) – Spark, light, burn, ignite, जलाना
- **Enforce** (verb) – cause (something) to happen by necessity or force; लागू करना

14. B) Harmonious (adjective) – Well-balanced, balanced, proportional; agreeable सुसंगत

- **Injurious** (adjective) – Harmful, damaging, detrimental, destructive, deleterious
हानिकारक
 - **Synchronous** (adjective) – existing or occurring at the same time. एक साथ होनेवाला
 - **Laborious** (adjective) – Arduous, hard, heavy, strenuous, grueling कठिन
15. D) **(be) Subject (to)** (verb) – bring (a person) under one's control or jurisdiction, typically by using force. के अधीन होना
In this context, "to" is the only preposition that grammatically fits with "subjected" in the phrase "subjected to DNA tests".
16. A) **PQRS**
P: Sentence P introduces the topic by stating that the Supreme Court rejected the Election Commission's plea to restrict the media from reporting judges' oral remarks during hearings. It highlights the court's belief that citizens have a right to know about the proceedings.
Q: Q provides additional information about the court's decision. It mentions the court's refusal to expunge an observation made by the Madras High Court, which blamed the poll panel for the surge in Covid-19 cases and suggested that its officers should face murder charges. The sentence clarifies that the observation was not part of the official judicial record.
R: R follows sentence Q and begins with the word "However," indicating a contrast or shift in focus. It mentions that despite the court's refusal to expunge the observation, it still appreciated the work of the Election Commission. This appreciation acknowledges the commission's role as an independent constitutional body responsible for maintaining the sanctity of electoral democracy.
S: S concludes the paragraph by elaborating on the Supreme Court's view of the Election Commission. It highlights the commission's track record of independence and its significant responsibility in ensuring the sanctity of electoral democracy.
17. B) **QPSR**
Q: Sentence Q provides the context by mentioning the 1992 Supreme Court decision on the 50 percent cap on reservation, with exceptions in extraordinary circumstances.
P: Sentence P states that the Supreme Court refused to reconsider its verdict and nullified a Maharashtra law that allowed the Maratha community to exceed the 60 percent reservation limit.
S: Sentence S highlights the Supreme Court's action in showing the rule book to governments and parties that prioritize vote bank interests over the purpose of reservation.
R: Finally, sentence R emphasizes that declaring the Maratha community as educationally and socially backward for reservation purposes would violate due process of law and the right to equality. Thus, the coherent paragraph is arranged as QPSR.
18. D) **SPRQ**
S: S sets the context by stating that the disruption of oxygen supply is causing deaths almost on a daily basis in the country.

P: P provides an example to support the context mentioned in sentence S. It mentions the incident in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar where patients died due to an alleged shortage of life-saving gas.

R: R adds another example to illustrate the severity of the situation. It talks about the incident in New Delhi where Covid-19 patients, including a senior doctor, died after the hospital ran out of medical oxygen for more than an hour.

Q: Q comes last in the paragraph. It provides a broader perspective by mentioning the Central government's claim of no shortage of oxygen. It also points out that the lapses are evident in various aspects such as production, allocation, transportation, and supply.

19. B) **PSRQ**

P: The paragraph begins with sentence P, which introduces the topic of a multi-billion sporting empire rising and falling in European football.

S: Sentence S provides the context of the breakaway European Super League (ESL) and the disarray caused by English and Italian clubs pulling out.

R: Sentence R explains that the greed of the biggest clubs, except those from Germany and France, formed the base of the ESL.

Q: Finally, sentence Q elaborates on the plans of the ESL and how they clashed with the principle of sporting meritocracy, leading to hostile public opinion.

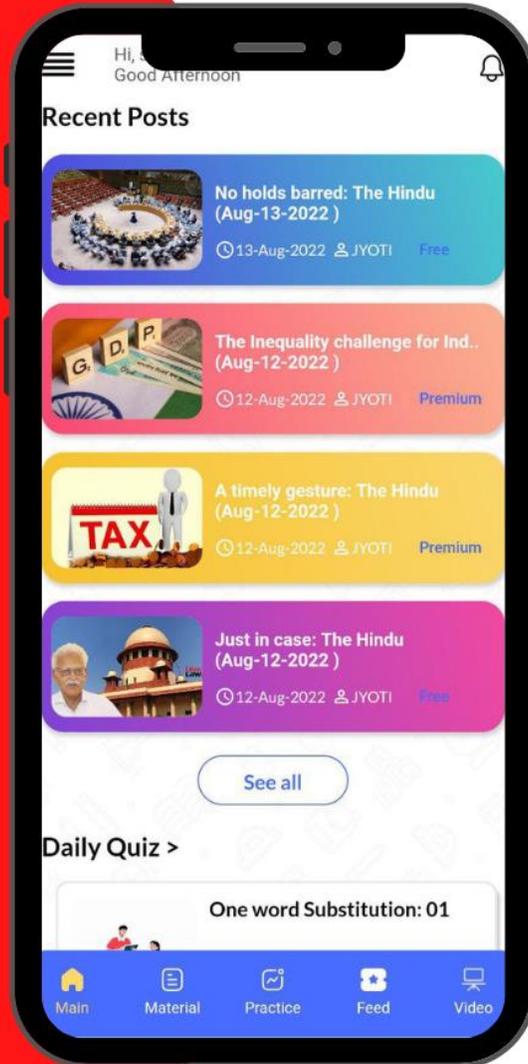
20. C) **PSQR**

P: The first sentence (P) introduces the main problem of trouble brewing for tea growers, orchardists, and other farmers in rain-deficient Himachal Pradesh due to the agriculture being largely rain-fed. It mentions the deficiency in rainfall and scanty snow, which has led to severe crop failure in terms of both quality and quantity.

S: The second sentence (S) provides specific information about the impact of the dry weather on tea production in the Kangra valley. It states that the production has been impacted by a whopping 75 percent due to the wilted tea leaves caused by the dry weather

Q: The third sentence (Q) shifts the focus to the apple producers in the Kullu valley. It explains their concerns about the inadequate amount of chilling time, which could potentially harm their fruit production. It also mentions that pear and cherry produce is similarly dependent upon chilling hours.

R: The final sentence (R) talks about the drought-like conditions affecting farmers in Bilaspur district. It mentions a 30-40 percent reduction in wheat yield due to the stunted crop. It also highlights the shortage of fodder in some areas, which has led to feeding wheat to cattle. It briefly refers to the vegetable farmers of Solan who faced tough times with a reduced yield.



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