

Express View on alien fossils: Life as you don't know it

There is a **narcissism, of the kind** that **insisted** that the Earth was the centre of the universe, or even now continues to deny **evolution**, among those who dismiss the possibility of **extra-terrestrial** life as a **fantasy**. But the “**myth**” of alien life, like all **archetypes** — from gods to **demons** — **keeps** coming back in new **avatars**. Part of the reason is that **films and novels**, from Hollywood and beyond, **teach** every generation about aliens, like Santa Claus or the Tooth **Fairy**. Then there's the “evidence”.

Earlier this week, journalist-turned-UFO expert Jaime Maussan presented what he claims are **fossilised** alien **corpses** that are nearly 2,000 years old. The **mummified remains** are almost a blockbuster **cliché** — large heads, a tiny body and three **elongated** fingers. While Maussan's **claims** are, **justifiably, taken with a pinch of salt** (he has made similar claims, with other mummified remains in the past, which **turned out to be** false), there is a **renewed** interest in alien visitors. Earlier this year, **David Grusch**, a former American intelligence officer, **testified** before the US Congress. He **asserted** that the country **possesses** technology from aliens. And on Thursday, NASA **outlined** how it will investigate Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAPs) — the new term for UFOs.



The **veracity** of these claims **notwithstanding**, there is a problem with how aliens are imagined. **Given** that the universe is infinite (or at least so vast that it may as well be), why is our **conception** of life so limited? There is something self-centred about “little green men”. Aliens seem too **often** to **resemble bipedal** humans, or at best Earth's **reptiles** or ocean life. There may well be aliens here already. Maybe they are not being recognised because both those who believe in their **existence** and those that deny it are too busy **navel-gazing**. [\[Practice Exercise\]](#)

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

Vocabulary

1. **Fossil** (noun) – the shape of a bone, a shell, or a plant or animal that has been preserved in rock for a very long period
2. **Narcissism** (noun) – the habit of admiring yourself too much, especially your appearance स्वयं की अत्यधिक प्रशंसा करने का स्वभाव
3. **Of the kind** (phrase) – like or similar to what has been said इस तरह का
4. **Insist** (verb) – maintain, assert, hold, contend, argue दृढता से कहना
5. **Evolution** (noun) – development, progression, transformation, adaptation, growth विकास
6. **Extra-terrestrial** (adjective) – otherworldly, off-Earth, non-Earthly, cosmic, alien अंतरिक्षीय
7. **Fantasy** (noun) – imagination, dream, illusion, fancy, daydream कल्पना
8. **Myth** (noun) – legend, fable, saga, folktale, lore कल्पित कथा
9. **Archetype** (noun) – the most typical example of a particular kind of person or thing मूल प्रतिरूप
10. **Demon** (noun) – devil, fiend, evil spirit, fallen angel दानव
11. **Fairy** (noun) – sprite, pixie, nymph, elf परी
12. **Fossilised** (adjective) – petrified, ossified, hardened, preserved जीवाश्मकृत
13. **Corpse** (noun) – body, carcass, cadaver, remains शव
14. **Mummified** (adjective) – preserved, embalmed, dried up ममीबनाया हुआ
15. **Remain** (noun) – residue, remnants, leftovers, traces पार्थिव अवशेष
16. **Cliché** (noun) – platitude, banality, truism, stereotype घिसी-पिटी उक्ति
17. **Elongated** (adjective) – stretched, lengthened, extended, expanded लंबि
18. **Claim** (noun) – assertion, declaration, allegation, contention दावा
19. **Justifiably** (adverb) – rightfully, legitimately, validly, warrantedly उचित रूप से
20. **Take with a pinch of salt** (phrase) – be skeptical, doubt, distrust, be wary of शंका से देखना
21. **Turn out to be** (phrase) – prove to be, be found to be, be revealed to be साबित होना

22. **Renewed** (adjective) – restored, revitalized, rekindled, rejuvenated
नवीनीकृत
23. **Testify** (verb) – bear witness, give evidence, attest, affirm साक्ष्य देना
24. **Assert** (verb) – declare, state, profess, affirm जोर देना
25. **Possess** (verb) – own, have, hold, be the owner of पाना
26. **Outline** (verb) – delineate, sketch, draft, trace, depict रूपरेखा तैयार करना
27. **Veracity** (noun) – truthfulness, accuracy, reliability, credibility, authenticity सत्यता
28. **Notwithstanding** (preposition) – despite, in spite of, although, even though, regardless of फिर भी
29. **Given** (preposition) – considering, taking into account, bearing in mind, assuming देखते हुए
30. **Conception** (noun) – understanding, notion, perception, view, idea धारणा
31. **Often** (adverb) – frequently, regularly, commonly, usually, habitually अक्सर
32. **Resemble** (verb) – look like, be similar to, mimic, echo, mirror समान दिखना
33. **Bipedal** (adjective) – Definition: relating to or involving the use of two legs for walking दो पैरों पर चलने वाला
34. **Reptile** (noun) – cold-blooded vertebrate, snake, lizard, crocodile सरीसृप
35. **Existence** (noun) – presence, being, subsistence, actuality, reality अस्तित्व
36. **Naval-grazing** (adjective) – spending too much time considering your own thoughts, feelings, or problems अपने बारे में अत्यधिक सोचना

Summary of the Editorial

1. The dismissal of extra-terrestrial life by some can be likened to past beliefs, like the Earth being the universe's center.
2. The idea of alien life is persistent, much like other cultural archetypes such as gods and demons.
3. Films and novels from various cultures perpetuate the concept of aliens to every generation.
4. This perpetuation can be likened to tales of Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy.
5. Journalist Jaime Maussan claims to have discovered fossilised alien corpses from nearly 2,000 years ago.
6. These mummified aliens match common descriptions: large heads, tiny bodies, and three elongated fingers.
7. Maussan's previous claims of similar nature have been debunked.
8. David Grusch, a former intelligence officer, stated to the US Congress that the US possesses alien technology.
9. NASA recently shared plans to study Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAPs), the updated term for UFOs.
10. The truth of these claims remains uncertain.
11. Our popular imagination of aliens is often limited and anthropocentric.
12. Given the universe's vastness, such a limited view of possible life forms seems paradoxical.
13. Popular images of aliens often resemble bipedal humans or familiar Earth animals.
14. It's possible that aliens might already be on Earth, but are unrecognised.
15. Both believers and skeptics might be overlooking the true nature of alien life due to their narrow perspectives.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What drives the continuous resurgence of the "myth" of alien life according to the passage?**
 - A. People have had actual encounters with aliens and thus keep the belief alive.
 - B. Films and novels, especially from Hollywood, teach every generation about aliens similar to cultural figures like Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy.
 - C. The fact that Earth was once considered the centre of the universe.
 - D. There's concrete evidence that is irrefutable regarding the existence of extra-terrestrial life.
2. **Why are Jaime Maussan's recent claims regarding mummified alien corpses met with skepticism?**
 - A. Because Jaime Maussan has never presented any credible evidence before.
 - B. He has previously made similar claims with other mummified remains which were proved false.
 - C. Because the mummified remains look like a typical Hollywood representation of aliens.
 - D. Because the US Congress has denied his claims.
3. **What is the main criticism regarding the way aliens are generally imagined as per the passage?**
 - A. Aliens are always thought to be hostile.
 - B. They are often imagined as small creatures with large heads.
 - C. The conception of life is limited, often resembling bipedal humans or Earth's reptiles or ocean life.
 - D. Aliens are usually represented as having advanced technologies.
4. **What is the tone of the first paragraph of the passage?**
 - A. Celebratory - The paragraph praises the ongoing fascination and mythical narratives around the concept of extra-terrestrial life.
 - B. Critical - The paragraph scrutinizes the narcissism apparent in the denial of the possibility of alien life, likening it to outdated or narrow viewpoints.
 - C. Informative - The paragraph neutrally presents facts about the history and evidence of alien life without expressing any personal opinion or criticism.
 - D. Sarcastic - The paragraph mocks the people who dismiss the possibility of extra-terrestrial life by comparing them to those who deny scientific facts like evolution.
5. **What is the central theme of the passage?**
 - A. The historical analysis of UFO sightings and investigations conducted by notable personalities.
 - B. The recurrent nature of alien life narratives and the limitations in human imagination in conceiving the true form of aliens.
 - C. The contribution of Hollywood and novels in fostering the myths and narratives surrounding extra-terrestrial life.

- D. The progress and development in space technology and how it aids in the investigation of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAPs).
6. **What would be the most appropriate title for the passage?**
- A. "The Evolution of Alien Narratives: From Mythical Archetypes to Modern Investigations"
 - B. "Aliens Among Us: A Critique of the Human Centric Vision of Extra-Terrestrial Life"
 - C. "The Influence of Media on the Perpetuation of Alien Myths and Narratives"
 - D. "Navigating the Universe: The New Age of Alien Investigations and Discoveries"
7. **Select the most appropriate idiom or phrase to fill in the blank in the given sentence.**
He is rich and famous and expects everyone to _____ on him.
- A. tap dance like mad
 - B. dead duck
 - C. give a song and dance
 - D. dance attendance
8. **Select the word that is INCORRECTLY spelt in the given sentence.**
Traditional people are used to using a calender for their routine activities in rural households.
- A. Traditional
 - B. Households
 - C. Calender
 - D. Activities
9. **Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words.**
Outer protective layer of a tree.
- A. Bark
 - B. Shrub
 - C. Rind
 - D. Peel
10. **Select the most appropriate option that can substitute the underlined segment in the given sentence.**
The question was raised for discussion before the members during the assembly session.
- A. came up
 - B. came off
 - C. came round
 - D. came out
11. **The following sentence has been divided into three segments, A, B, C. One of them may contain a grammatical error. Select the segment that contains the error, from the given options. If you don't find any error, mark 'No error' as your answer.**
He is not rich (A) / so he cannot afford (B) / to buy a expensive car (C).
- A. C
 - B. A
 - C. No error

D. B

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

- P. An implication of continuing high food-price inflation is that a section of the population could be facing hardship in consuming food of adequate nutritional value.
- Q. The rise in the price of food first accelerated sharply in 2019, and has climbed in most years thereafter.
- R. India may be the fastest growing large economy of the world, but it is also facing accelerating food-price inflation.
- S. In July this year, annual inflation exceeded 11%, the highest in a decade.
- A. PSQR B.RQSP C.PQRS D.RPQS

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

- P. And all against the backdrop of the climate crisis, driving the extreme weather events that are occurring more frequently and with greater intensity.
- Q. The aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with a polycrisis of war, debt, and food insecurity, are putting our collective ability to cope to the test.
- R. Risks are being created faster than they are being reduced.
- S. As leaders underscored at the G-20 summit in New Delhi on September 10, ahead of the United Nations General Assembly SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) summit in New York next week, the world stands at a critical juncture.
- A. RPQS B.RSPQ C.SRQP D.SPRQ

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

- P. In one's health or career, betrayal by a trusted friend, or the worrisome waywardness of an offspring
- Q. Inevitably, sooner or later, everyone faces a situation that calls for the exercise of varying degrees of personal resilience
- R. Adversities and crises come in many avatars and it requires resilience to counter and overcome these
- S. It could be the loss of a loved one, a serious setback
- A. QSPR B.PSRQ C.QRPS D.PQSR

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

- P. At least in the past few decades, most of our higher education institutions have been vying with one another in producing a good number of research papers
- Q. To improve their global ranking and increase their market value in society
- R. Journals are in great demand, and they are offered highly competitive salary packages
- S. The scholars with considerable number of publications in SCOPUS-indexed journals or Web of Sciences or any other similar
- A. QSPR B.PSRQ C.QSRP D.PQSR

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

- P. Ladakh had been on my bucket list for years.
- Q. We consulted a doctor to ensure all is well before starting on our most unforgettable vacation.

- R. My spouse and I received unsolicited advice from friends, relatives and casual acquaintances against going on this trip as we were senior citizens.
- S. Only well into my sixties could I make it to my dream destination.
- A. SQPR B.PSRQ C.SQRP D.PQRS

Comprehension

The Chess World Cup, which concluded at Baku on Thursday, caught the imagination of the Indian public the way very few sporting events have ____1____. Eighteen-year-old Chennai lad R. Praggnanandhaa's astonishing run all the way to the final was the main reason. However, he was stopped by Magnus Carlsen, the highest-rated player in history. The Norwegian is a five-time world champion, but this is his first World Cup, the only significant trophy that had been missing in his ____2____. Ever since Carlsen dethroned Viswanathan Anand in the latter's hometown Chennai in 2013, the former's reign on the chessboard has been ____3____. If he is no longer the official world champion — that title now belongs to China's Ding Liren, who was crowned a few months ago — it is because he has chosen to stay away. He does not find the motivation strong enough and he is not comfortable with the format of the World title match involving a series of games of a long duration. He has said that he would not be a part of the next cycle of the World championship either. This is not Carlsen's loss; it is chess's. ____4____ wins the World title cannot claim to be the planet's best player as long as Carlsen is around.

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

17. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 1.**
- A. Wanting of
B. Short of
C. Way back
D. Of late
18. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2.**
- A. Motive
B. Cabinet
C. Diaspora
D. Frailty
19. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3.**
- A. Amazing
B. Absolute
C. Assisted
D. Unveiled
20. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4.**
- A. That
B. Which
C. Whichever
D. Whoever

Answers

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

Explanations

1. B) The correct answer is b. The passage mentions that part of the reason for the recurring "myth" of alien life is due to films and novels that teach every generation about them.
2. B) The correct answer is b. The passage states that Maussan's claims are met with skepticism because he has made similar claims in the past which turned out to be false.
3. C) The correct answer is c. The passage criticizes the way aliens are imagined, noting that they are often conceived as resembling bipedal humans or Earth's animals.
4. B) The tone of the first paragraph can be considered critical as it critiques the dismissive attitude of those who regard the idea of extra-terrestrial life as a myth, relating this to a form of narcissism that is likened to previous flawed viewpoints such as the earth being the centre of the universe or denying evolution.
5. B) The central theme of the passage seems to be the recurrent nature of narratives about alien life, touching upon how these narratives are fostered through various mediums and the limitations in the human conception of what aliens might be like, which appears to be constrained by self-centric viewpoints.
6. B) Option B, "Aliens Among Us: A Critique of the Human Centric Vision of Extra-Terrestrial Life" serves as an apt title for the passage as it encapsulates the criticism laid out in the passage about the human-centric approach in imagining aliens and how these viewpoints might be limiting the possibility of recognizing the true nature or form of extra-terrestrial life. It touches upon the recurrent nature of alien narratives and calls for a broader perspective in considering the existence and forms of alien life.
7. D) **Dance attendance on** (phrase) – to do everything that someone asks you to and treat them in a special way
 - **Tap dance like mad** (phrase) – to be busy continuously; to have to move fast to distract someone. लगातार व्यस्त रहना
 - **Dead duck** (phrase) – someone or something that is very unlikely to be successful, especially because of a mistake or bad judgment
 - **Give a song and dance** (phrase) – a long and complicated statement or story, sometimes one that is not true
8. C) 'Calender' के बदले 'Calendar' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'Calender' गलत spelling है। सही spelling 'Calendar' होती है।
 - 'Calendar' will be used instead of 'Calender' because 'Calender' is a misspelling. The correct spelling is 'Calendar'.
9. A) **Bark** (noun) – The protective outer sheath of the trunk, branches, twigs, and twigs of trees and woody shrubs. छाल
 - **Shrub** (noun) – A small to medium-sized woody plant, with multiple stems and generally lower than a tree. झाड़ी

- **Rind** (noun) – The thick and firm outer layer or skin of some fruits and vegetables. छिलका
 - **Peel** (noun) – The outer covering of a fruit, which can be removed. छिलका
10. A) 'Came up' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "came up" का अर्थ होता है किसी विषय को चर्चा के लिए उठाना। जबकि 'Came off' का अर्थ है सफलता प्राप्त करना या घटित होना, 'Came round' का अर्थ है अपनी राय बदलना या सहमत होना, और 'Came out' का अर्थ है प्रकाश में आना या प्रकट होना, जो इस संदर्भ में सही नहीं है।
- 'Came up' should be used because it means to bring up a topic for discussion. Whereas, 'Came off' means to succeed or occur, 'Came round' implies changing one's opinion or agreeing, and 'Came out' means to reveal or become known, which don't fit in this context.
11. A) 'a expensive' के बदले '**an expensive**' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'expensive' शब्द consonant sound से नहीं, बल्की स्वर ध्वनि से आरंभ होता है, और इसलिए 'an' का प्रयोग होगा है; जैसे— He cannot afford to buy an expensive car.
- 'an expensive' will be used instead of 'a expensive' because the word 'expensive' begins with a vowel sound, and thus 'an' is used before it; Like— He cannot afford to buy an expensive car.
12. B) **RQSP**
- R:** This sentence introduces the main topic of the paragraph, which is about the accelerating food-price inflation in India.
- Q:** After mentioning that India is facing accelerating food-price inflation in Sentence R, Sentence Q provides a historical context about when this trend started.
- S:** Building on the historical context from Q, S provides a specific recent statistic (11% inflation in July) to emphasize the severity of the issue. The phrase "this year" and the reference to a "decade" anchor the timeline after 2019, maintaining the time sequence
- P:** After giving the background and current status in R, Q, and S, Sentence P then explains a consequence or implication of this problem.
13. C) **SRQP**
- S:** This sentence sets the context. It mentions a specific event (the G-20 summit in New Delhi) and a timeframe ("on September 10").
- R:** The statement in R ("Risks are being") can be viewed as a continuation of the situation presented in S. The G-20 leaders' underscore at a summit typically addresses significant global challenges, and the increasing risks are precisely that type of challenge.
- Q:** After introducing the topic of risks in R, Q provides specifics on what those risks are: "The aftershocks...". This sentence also presents the combined effect of these risks as testing "our collective ability to cope".
- P:** The word "And" at the start of P indicates it's adding to the list or building upon the prior sentence, which is Q.
14. A) **QSPR**
- Q:** Sentence Q introduces the idea that everyone at some point will face a situation that requires resilience

S: In sentence Q, "everyone" and "situation" are introduced. In the next sentence, S, "It" can be inferred to refer to the "situation" mentioned in sentence Q. Therefore, S follows Q.

P: Sentence P further enumerates examples of adversities that one might face, thereby extending the ideas introduced in S.

R: Sentence R, with the words "Adversities and crises," acts as a concluding statement, providing a summary and reinforcing the main idea that adversities come in many forms and require resilience to overcome

15. **D) PQSR**

P: Sentence P begins with "At least in the past few decades...", indicating a starting point

Q: Sentence Q has "their", which is a pronoun. The antecedent for "their" must be "higher education institutions" from sentence P. This suggests that P should come before Q

S: Sentence S talks about scholars and their publications in certain kinds of journals

R: Sentence R talks about how journals are in demand and offers related to them. Logically, after discussing the value/importance of publishing in esteemed journals (S), it makes sense to move onto the value of those journals (R)

16. **B) PSRQ**

P: Sentence P provides a context or background to the narrative, introducing Ladakh as a long-time desired destination

S: Sentence S reveals an age-related reason for the delay: "Only well into my sixties could...." This links back to the "for years" in sentence P, giving a chronological sequence to the narrative

R: Sentence R introduces a potential challenge or obstacle faced by the narrator and their spouse: the unsolicited advice against taking the trip due to their age as senior citizens. This ties directly to the mention of "my sixties" in Sentence S

Q: After learning about the advice in R which suggests concerns about the trip, Sentence Q describes a precaution they took in response to these concerns by consulting a doctor.

17. **D) 'Of late'** का अर्थ होता है हाल ही में या अभी-अभी। संदर्भ के अनुसार, Chess World Cup ने भारतीय जनता की कल्पना को आकर्षित किया है जिस तरह से बहुत कम खेलने वाले प्रतियोगिताओं ने किया है। इसलिए 'Of late' यहाँ पर सही है क्योंकि यह इशारा कर रहा है कि यह हाल ही में हुआ घटना है। 'Wanting of', 'Short of', और 'Way back' इस संदर्भ में सही नहीं हैं।

- 'Of late' should be used because it means recently or in the near past. In the context, the Chess World Cup has attracted the attention of the Indian public like few other sporting events have done in the recent past. Thus, 'Of late' fits here. 'Wanting of', 'Short of', and 'Way back' don't fit in this context.

18. **B) cabinet का उपयोग करेंगे क्योंकि "cabinet" यहाँ पर एक संकेतिक तरीके से उपयोग किया जा सकता है जिससे मेरा मतलब है किसी व्यक्ति के पुरस्कार और उपलब्धियों का संग्रह। इस अंश में**

बताया गया है कि Carlsen के पास पहले यह World Cup नहीं था, जो उसकी 'cabinet' में अभी तक गायब था। जबकि 'Motive' का अर्थ होता है प्रयोजन या कारण, 'Diaspora' का अर्थ होता है विविधता या प्रसार, और 'Frailty' का अर्थ है कमजोरी, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

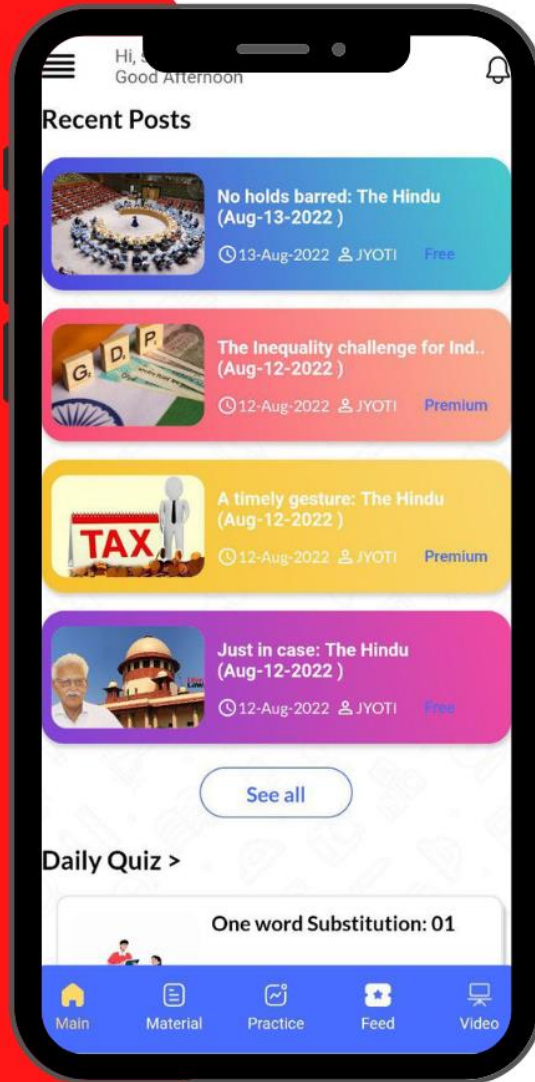
- We would use 'cabinet' here as it can be metaphorically referred to as a collection of a person's awards and achievements. The passage mentions that this World Cup was the only significant trophy missing from Carlsen's 'cabinet'. On the other hand, 'Motive' means purpose or reason, 'Diaspora' refers to dispersion or spread, and 'Frailty' implies weakness, which are not appropriate in this context.

19. B) 'Absolute' का use होगा क्योंकि "absolute" का अर्थ होता है पूर्ण या निरपेक्ष। Sentence में mention किया गया है कि Carlsen का राज शतरंज की बोर्ड पर कैसा रहा है, और जैसे कि पहले ही बताया गया है कि वह highest-rated player है, इसलिए 'Absolute' यहाँ सही है। 'Amazing' का अर्थ होता है अद्भुत, 'Assisted' का अर्थ है सहायक या मदद करना, और 'Unveiled' का अर्थ है प्रकट करना, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

- 'Absolute' should be used because it means complete or unrestricted. The sentence is discussing how Carlsen's reign on the chessboard has been, and given that he is already mentioned as the highest-rated player, his control or dominance can be described as 'absolute'. 'Amazing' means astonishing, 'Assisted' implies helped or aided, and 'Unveiled' means revealed, which don't fit in this context.

20. D) 'Whoever' का use होगा क्योंकि इस context में हम किसी विशेष व्यक्ति को निर्दिष्ट नहीं कर रहे हैं, बल्कि हम कह रहे हैं कि कोई भी व्यक्ति जो विश्व चैम्पियन बनता है, जब तक Carlsen मौजूद है, वह ग्रह का सबसे अच्छा खिलाड़ी नहीं कहला सकता। इसलिए 'Whoever' यहाँ सही है। 'That', 'Which' और 'Whichever' इस context में सही नहीं हैं क्योंकि वे विशेष व्यक्ति या वस्तु को निर्दिष्ट नहीं करते हैं।

- 'Whoever' should be used because in this context, we are not specifying a particular person but saying that any person who becomes the World champion cannot claim to be the best on the planet as long as Carlsen is around. Hence, 'Whoever' fits here. 'That', 'Which', and 'Whichever' are not appropriate in this context as they don't specify a particular person or thing



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