

Population priorities: On Interim Budget statement and the Census

No survey can **substitute** the Census, which is yet to be conducted for this **decade**

In what was an **intriguing** statement in her Interim Budget speech, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that a high-powered committee will be **constituted** to consider the challenges arising from “fast population growth and **demographic** changes”. With the Union government repeatedly postponing the **decennial** Census — it has not been conducted for the first time in a decade since 1881 — there is no direct evidence to support this statement. It is **evident** that India is now the most populous country, but the Sample Registration System statistical **report** in 2020 and the National Family Health **Survey-5** (2019-21) **have** shown that the **total fertility rate** (TFR) in India has fallen to 2 overall, with only a few States — Bihar (2.98), Meghalaya (2.91), Uttar Pradesh (2.35), Jharkhand (2.26) and Manipur (2.17) — having a TFR above 2.1. Clearly, the high population **growth** of the kind seen in the 20th century **has** been largely arrested — the TFR fell from 5.7 in 1950 to 2 in 2020, **albeit** differentially across regions. The population **share** of the southern States, **reduced** to 21% in 2011 from 26% in 1951, largely a consequence of a rapid reduction in TFR due to better socio-economic **outcomes** and education, and despite higher **migration** to these States. While the surveys mentioned are **robust** and necessary, they are no substitute for the **comprehensive** Census; the continued **delay** in its implementation **reflects poorly on** the Union Home Ministry that is motivated by other priorities rather than **executing** a **vital** programme of Indian **governance**.

The demographic **shift** in India and The **rising** life expectancy **have resulted in** challenges and opportunities. The much **touted demographic dividend** — the relatively high proportion of the working age population in the developing world — **is** meaningful only if there are sufficient jobs and if they enjoy **some degree of** social security that will help them when they age. With high unemployment and the creation of non-farm jobs, which will increase productivity and **cater to** skilled employment, relatively **slack** in the last few years, there is the possibility of the country **squandering** this dividend. The “high-powered” committee will be performing a crucial role if it engages meaningfully in **addressing** questions related to jobs and **social security** and the challenges citizens face due to rapid **urbanisation** and **mechanisation** of work. However, if the committee focuses on the **ruling** Bharatiya Janata Party’s **pet bogies** of looking at population issues through the **lens** of religion and **immigration**, it will only **distract** governance from making use of the fast **eroding** democratic dividend in the country. **[Practice Exercise]**

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

Vocabulary

1. **Interim Budget** (noun) – An Interim Budget is presented by a government that is going through a transition period or is in its last year in office ahead of general elections.
अंतरिम बजट
2. **Substitute** (verb) – Replace, Exchange, Swap, Stand-in, Alternate बदलना
3. **Decade** (noun) – Period of Ten years दशक
4. **Intriguing** (adjective) – Fascinating, Interesting, Engaging, Captivating, Compelling दिलचस्प
5. **Constitute** (verb) – Form, Compose, Create, Establish, Set up बनाना
6. **Demographic** (adjective) – Statistical, Population-based, Census-based, Societal, Ethnographic जनसांख्यिकीय
7. **Decennial** (adjective) – recurring every ten years दस वर्षीय
8. **Evident** (adjective) – Obvious, Clear, Apparent, Manifest, Patent स्पष्ट
9. **Total Fertility Rate** (noun) – It represents the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with age-specific fertility rates of the specified year. प्रजनन दर
10. **Albeit** (adverb) – Although, Even though, Even if, Despite, Notwithstanding हालाँकि
11. **Outcome** (noun) – Result, Consequence, Upshot, Aftermath, End result परिणाम
12. **Migration** (noun) – Movement, Relocation, Shift, Transfer, Transit प्रवास
13. **Robust** (adjective) – Strong, Sturdy, Resilient, Durable, Tough मजबूत
14. **Comprehensive** (adjective) – Thorough, All-inclusive, All-encompassing, Exhaustive, Detailed व्यापक
15. **Reflect poorly on** (phrase) – to cast in a negative light, discredit, dishonor खराब तरह से दर्शाना
16. **Execute** (verb) – Perform, Carry out, Implement, Enact, Administer कार्यान्वित करना
17. **Vital** (adjective) – Crucial, Essential, Critical, Key, Indispensable महत्वपूर्ण
18. **Governance** (noun) – Administration, Management, Direction, Control, Stewardship प्रशासन
19. **Shift** (noun) – Change, Transition, Movement, Adjustment, Transformation बदलाव
20. **Result in** (phrasal verb) – Lead to, Cause, Bring about, Produce, Generate का परिणाम होना

21. **Touted** (adjective) – Promoted, Publicized, Advertised, Acclaimed, Lauded प्रचारित
22. **Demographic Dividend** (noun) – The economic growth potential that results from a shift in a population's age structure, typically when the working-age population is larger relative to the non-working age population. जनसांख्यिक लाभ
23. **Some degree of** (phrase) – A certain amount of, A level of, A measure of, A bit of, A portion of कुछ हद तक
24. **Cater to** (phrasal verb) – Serve, Provide for, Supply, Accommodate, Fulfill the needs of पूरा करना
25. **Slack** (adjective) – Loose, Lax, Relaxed, Negligent, Remiss ढीला/ सुस्त
26. **Squander** (verb) – Waste, Misuse, Mismanage, Spend recklessly, Dissipate गवां देना
27. **Address** (verb) – Deal with, Tend to, Attend to, Focus on, Confront सुलझाना, निपटाना
28. **Social Security** (noun) – the protection that a society provides to individuals and households to ensure access to health care and to guarantee income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of a breadwinner. सामाजिक सुरक्षा
29. **Urbanisation** (noun) – City development, Metropolitan growth, Urban growth, Urban expansion, Town growth शहरीकरण
30. **Mechanisation** (noun) – Automation, Motorization, Industrialization, Computerization, Robotization यंत्रीकरण
31. **Ruling** (adjective) – governing, in charge, leading, dominant, controlling सत्तारूढ़
32. **Pet bogies** (noun) – False fears, Unfounded worries, Irrational anxieties, Baseless concerns, Imaginary terrors निराधार डर
33. **Lens** (noun) – Perspective, Viewpoint, Standpoint, Angle, Outlook दृष्टिकोण
34. **Immigration** (noun) – Settlement, Relocation, In-migration, Entry, Arrival प्रवास
35. **Distract** (verb) – Divert, Mislead, Confuse, Disturb, Sidetrack ध्यान भटकाना
36. **Eroding** (adjective) – Wearing away, Deteriorating, Crumbling, Declining, Degenerating घटता हुआ

Summary of the Editorial

1. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the formation of a high-powered committee in her Interim Budget speech to address challenges from rapid population growth and demographic changes.
2. The decennial Census, a crucial tool for demographic assessment, has not been conducted this decade, marking the first such delay since 1881.
3. The postponement of the Census leaves a gap in direct evidence to support the minister's statement about population issues.
4. India is currently the most populous country, but recent surveys indicate a significant decline in the Total Fertility Rate (TFR).
5. The TFR in India has decreased to an average of 2, with some states like Bihar, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Manipur having slightly higher rates.
6. The decrease in TFR from 5.7 in 1950 to 2 in 2020 signals a substantial reduction in population growth, particularly in the 20th century.
7. Southern states have experienced a significant decline in population share, attributed to lower TFR resulting from improved socio-economic conditions and education.
8. Surveys like the Sample Registration System and the National Family Health Survey are valuable but cannot replace the comprehensive data a Census provides.
9. The delay in conducting the Census is seen as a failure of the Union Home Ministry, influenced by priorities other than executing this vital governance program.
10. India's demographic shift and increased life expectancy present both challenges and opportunities, particularly concerning the workforce.
11. The demographic dividend, a high proportion of working-age population, is beneficial only if accompanied by job creation and social security measures.
12. Recent trends show high unemployment and a lack of creation of non-farm, skilled jobs, risking the potential benefits of the demographic dividend.
13. The high-powered committee's success depends on its focus on addressing employment, social security, and urbanization challenges rather than distractions.
14. Concerns are raised about the committee's effectiveness if it concentrates on the ruling party's focus areas like religion and immigration, which may divert from critical demographic issues.
15. The editorial emphasizes the importance of conducting the Census and addressing demographic changes pragmatically to leverage India's demographic dividend effectively.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What does the passage imply about the relationship between the total fertility rate (TFR) and socio-economic outcomes based on the example of southern States?** [Editorial Page]
 - A. The southern States have shown a significant increase in TFR due to improved socio-economic outcomes and education.
 - B. The reduction in TFR in the southern States is largely attributed to poor socio-economic outcomes and lower education levels.
 - C. The southern States have maintained a constant TFR regardless of socio-economic outcomes and education levels.
 - D. The southern States have experienced a rapid reduction in TFR due to better socio-economic outcomes and education.
2. **Based on the passage, what can be inferred about the Union government's stance on conducting the Census?**
 - A. The Union government has actively conducted the decennial Census without any delays to accurately reflect demographic changes.
 - B. Despite the importance of the Census, the Union government has repeatedly postponed it, reflecting a lack of prioritization.
 - C. The Union government has replaced the decennial Census with the Sample Registration System and National Family Health Survey due to their accuracy.
 - D. The Union government considers the high-powered committee's findings as a sufficient substitute for the delayed Census.
3. **What is the tone of the line: "The "high-powered" committee will be performing a crucial role if it engages meaningfully in addressing questions related to jobs and social security and the challenges citizens face due to rapid urbanisation and mechanisation of work"?**
 - A. Pessimistic
 - B. Neutral
 - C. Optimistic
 - D. Critical
4. **What is the main theme of the passage?**
 - A. The importance of conducting the Census in India
 - B. The challenges of population growth and demographic changes in India
 - C. The role of high-powered committees in governance
 - D. The impact of socio-economic outcomes on fertility rates
5. **Based on the passage, what is the primary importance of conducting the Census in India for this decade?**
 - A. To track the demographic shift and assess the challenges and opportunities arising from rising life expectancy.
 - B. To facilitate the ruling party's focus on religion and immigration issues.
 - C. To evaluate the effectiveness of the high-powered committee in job creation.
 - D. To ensure the distribution of social welfare benefits equally among all citizens.

6. **What potential risk does the passage highlight if the high-powered committee does not address employment and social security issues effectively?**
- A. The demographic dividend could be fully utilized, ensuring prosperity for all citizens.
 - B. The focus on religion and immigration by the committee could enhance national security.
 - C. The country could squander the demographic dividend due to high unemployment and insufficient creation of skilled jobs.
 - D. Rapid urbanization and mechanization could be seamlessly integrated into society without any challenges.
7. **What is a synonym for "arrested" as used in the passage regarding population growth?**
- A. Accelerated
 - B. Halted
 - C. Continued
 - D. Begun
8. **What is an antonym for "robust" as used in the passage to describe surveys?**
- A. Strong
 - B. Fragile
 - C. Reliable
 - D. Sturdy
9. **Parts of a sentence are given below in jumbled order. Arrange the parts in the correct order to form a meaningful sentence.**
An atmosphere of distrust that Pakistan has earned / the London-based advisory firm Henley & Partners' assessment indicates/owing to its act of supporting terrorists and /mismanagement of public affairs./
- A) An atmosphere of distrust that Pakistan has earned owing to its act of supporting terrorists and the London-based advisory firm Henley & Partners' assessment indicates mismanagement of public affairs.
 - B) The London-based advisory firm Henley & Partners' assessment indicates owing to its act of supporting terrorists and an atmosphere of distrust that Pakistan has earned mismanagement of public affairs.
 - C) Owing to its act of supporting terrorists and mismanagement of public affairs an atmosphere of distrust that Pakistan has earned the London-based advisory firm Henley & Partners' assessment indicates.
 - D) The London-based advisory firm Henley & Partners' assessment indicates an atmosphere of distrust that Pakistan has earned owing to its act of supporting terrorists and mismanagement of public affairs.
10. **Select the most appropriate meaning of the given idiom**
Mark complains about his teaching job a lot, but I knew if he were offered a tenured position in the school, he would ***jump at the chance***
- A. To be less than the amount or standard that is needed or that you want
 - B. To place or rest something above or on top of something else
 - C. To accept or seize with alacrity an opportunity (to do something).

- D. to pay attention to a situation carefully so that you can deal with any changes or problems
11. **Some sentences are given below. While the first and the last sentences (1 and 2) are in the correct order, the sentences in between are jumbled up. Arrange the sentences in the correct order to form a meaningful and coherent paragraph**
1. Having learnt a lesson from the earlier UN climate summit COP conferences where the West tended to be more assertive than the developing world, India has at the ongoing COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, been, and rightly so, vocal about the measures for combating the climate crisis.
 - A. Feeling the heat of the agreement signed at last year's Glasgow COP, India, though committed to the pact as it enhances its renewable energy sector, has realised that the developed countries have ducked their responsibility.
 - B. He laid emphasis on the phasing down — rather than phasing out — of all fossil fuels.
 - C. Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav was categorical that no fuel be singled out in the fight against climate change.
 - D. This is evident from the baseless singling out of coal from among the fossil fuels as the villain of the piece in Glasgow.
 2. India was particularly projected in a bad light for its continued dependence on coal in around 50% of its power generation.
 - A. ABCD
 - B. CBAD
 - C. CBDA
 - D. ACBD
12. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
- P. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come out with a stimulus package that is part of a series to counter the ill-effects of the countrywide lockdown.
 - Q. The second component is raising Rs 50,000 crore for banks which in turn subscribe to bonds issued by corporates.
 - R. It has two components, including Rs 50,000 crore for NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development), SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) and NHB (National Housing Bank) for onward transmission to the ones who actually need succour — small, medium and tiny urban and rural units and micro finance institutions.
 - S. Having slipped up in raising the first tranche of Rs 75,000 crore in March when it did not specify any conditions, the RBI is now making sure that half the money goes only to the targeted beneficiaries and not to mega corporates and PSUs.
 - A. QSRP
 - B. SRQP
 - C. SQPR
 - D. PRQS
13. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
- P. But, given the past experience, India needs to mount pressure especially on the US, the UK, and Canada to curb Khalistani extremism.
 - Q. The Western powers dominating the world scene had protected Pakistan for long despite evidence of it aiding Khalistani terrorism in the Indian State of Punjab.
 - R. India is rightly exercising utmost seriousness in calling out the neglect of the Western world towards the Khalistani extremist sentiments against India being fomented from their land.
 - S. India's External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar has summoned the Canadian envoy to India and issued a demarche.

- A. RPQS B.RSPQ C.SRQP D.SPRQ

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

- P. Data released by the National Statistical Office on Wednesday showed that retail inflation edged up to 4.8 per cent in June, after falling to a 20-month low of 4.3 per cent in May.
- Q. Over the course of the entire first quarter (April-June), inflation has averaged 4.6 per cent, in line with the Reserve Bank of India's forecast in the last monetary policy committee meeting.
- R. While this would suggest that the macroeconomic environment is keeping a fine balance, there are risks of it turning unfavourable in the months ahead on account of the rains.
- S. Alongside, data also shows that industrial production maintained its momentum. The index of industrial production rose by 5.2 per cent in May, up from 4.5 per cent the month before.

- A. QSPR B.PSRQ C.QSRP D.PQSR

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

- P. The southwest monsoon had recorded 52.6 per cent rainfall deficiency during the first two weeks of the season that runs from June to September.
- Q. Only eastern India, Maharashtra and the South (barring Tamil Nadu) remain in the red zone, although the past one week and more have seen even many of these areas receive good showers.
- R. but also turning the cumulative deficiency into a 2.3 per cent surplus as on July 10.
- S. It has made remarkable progress since — not only covering the entire country by July 2 (six days before schedule),

- A. QSPR B.PSRQ C.QSRP D.PQSR

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

- P. The BSE Midcap index is up by around 26 per cent over the past year, while the smallcap index has also seen similar gains.
- Q. Day to day fluctuations notwithstanding, the Indian stock market has had a healthy run over the past year.
- R. It is currently trading at a PE (price to earnings) ratio of around 24, broadly in line with its 10-year average. The exuberance is not just limited to the larger companies.
- S. The Sensex has recently crossed the 65,000-mark and is up 20 per cent over the past year.

- A. QSPR B.PSRQ C.QSRP D.PQSR

Comprehension

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a package of schemes for farmers with a total ____1____ of Rs 3.7 lakh crore. According to the Union government, the schemes are aimed at boosting farmers' income, strengthening natural/organic farming, restoring soil health and ensuring food security. The focus is on promoting sustainable agriculture for the 'overall well-being and economic ____2____ of farmers'. The PM-PRANAM (Programme for Restoration, Awareness generation, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother earth) ____3____ incentivise states to promote alternative fertilisers and a balanced use of chemical fertilisers. The bulk of the package has been ____4____ for urea subsidy for three years (2022-23 to 2024-25).

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

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

- A. Votary
- B. Outlay
- C. Efficacy
- D. Leeway

18. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2.**

- A. Dissent
- B. Betterment
- C. Assessment
- D. Amendment

19. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3.**

- A. Will
- B. Are
- C. Was
- D. Were

20. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4.**

- A. Overlooked
- B. Marked
- C. Earmarked
- D. Earmark

21. **Select the option that expresses the given sentence in passive voice.**

She handles all tasks efficiently.

- A. All tasks are being handled efficiently by her.
- B. All tasks were handled efficiently by her.
- C. All tasks have been handled efficiently by her.
- D. All tasks are handled efficiently by her.

22. **Select the option that expresses the given sentence in active voice.**

All weapons were surrendered by them.

- A. They have surrendered all weapons.
- B. They surrendered all weapons.
- C. They had surrendered all weapons.
- D. They are surrendering all weapons

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

The authorities are assured the people that they will look into the matter.

- A. has assured
- B. have assured
- C. have been assured
- D. No substitution required

24. Select the most appropriate **ANTONYM** of the given word.

Modest

- A. Glum
- B. Sullen
- C. Unhappy
- D. Conceited

25. Select the option that can be used as a **one-word substitute** for the given group of words.

The study of earthquakes

- A. Geology
- B. Geography
- C. Topography
- D. Seismology

Answers

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

Explanations

1. **D) The southern States have experienced a rapid reduction in TFR due to better socio-economic outcomes and education.**

The passage indicates that the population share of the southern States reduced from 26% in 1951 to 21% in 2011, which is largely a consequence of a rapid reduction in the total fertility rate (TFR) due to better socio-economic outcomes and education. This demonstrates the positive impact of improved socio-economic conditions and education on lowering the TFR.

2. **B) Despite the importance of the Census, the Union government has repeatedly postponed it, reflecting a lack of prioritization**

The passage explicitly states that the Union government has repeatedly postponed the decennial Census, which has not been conducted for the first time in a decade since 1881. This delay reflects poorly on the Union Home Ministry, indicating a lack of prioritization for executing a vital programme of Indian governance, despite acknowledging the importance of the Census for understanding demographic changes and challenges.

3. **C) Optimistic**

The tone of the given line is optimistic. It suggests a positive outlook on the potential impact of the "high-powered" committee's engagement in addressing significant societal challenges. The use of the word "crucial role" combined with "if it engages meaningfully" implies hope and a positive expectation regarding the committee's ability to make meaningful contributions towards solving problems related to jobs, social security, and the challenges of urbanisation and mechanisation.

4. **B) The challenges of population growth and demographic changes in India**

The main theme of the passage is the challenges arising from population growth and demographic changes in India. This theme is introduced through the context of the Interim Budget speech by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the discussion on the postponement of the Census. The passage elaborates on the demographic shift, the falling total fertility rate (TFR), and the potential demographic dividend, highlighting the challenges and opportunities these demographic changes present. It also addresses the importance of jobs, social security, and the impact of rapid urbanisation and mechanisation of work, framing these within the broader theme of population dynamics and demographic challenges in India.

5. **A) To track the demographic shift and assess the challenges and opportunities arising from rising life expectancy.**

The passage underscores the irreplaceable role of the Census in understanding demographic changes within India, particularly the shift and its implications, including both challenges and opportunities tied to an aging population and the demographic dividend.

Unlike other surveys, the Census provides comprehensive data critical for planning and addressing the needs associated with these demographic trends, such as employment, social security, and the impact of urbanization and mechanization.

6. **C) The country could squander the demographic dividend due to high unemployment and insufficient creation of skilled jobs.**

The passage clearly articulates the risk of wasting the demographic dividend, which is the potential economic growth that can arise from having a larger proportion of working-age individuals in the population. This risk is tied directly to the current challenges of high unemployment rates and a lack of creation of skilled, non-farm jobs. The demographic dividend is only advantageous if accompanied by sufficient job creation and social security measures.

7. **B) Halted**

In the context of the passage, "arrested" refers to the significant reduction or halting of the high population growth that was characteristic of the 20th century.

8. **B) Fragile**

The passage refers to the surveys as "robust," indicating they are strong and reliable. The antonym for "robust" in this context would be "fragile," which means easily broken or damaged, signifying the opposite of strong and reliable

9. **D) The London-based advisory firm Henley & Partners' assessment indicates an atmosphere of distrust that Pakistan has earned owing to its act of supporting terrorists and mismanagement of public affairs.**

10. **C) Jump at the chance of** (Phrase) – To immediately accept an offer; to seize an opportunity
मौका का फायदा उठाना

11. **B) 1CBAD2**

1: This sentence introduces the topic and the setting - COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh. It tells us that India has learned from past COP conferences and is now vocal about the climate crisis

C: The next sentence logically should be C, It provides a specific example of India's aforementioned vocal stance by highlighting the Environment Minister's statement that reflects this position.

B: The sentence B, is a continuation from sentence C and elaborates on Minister Bhupender Yadav's stance by detailing the specific focus he put on the approach towards fossil fuels

A: The sentence A, follows logically from B, as it provides further information on India's reaction to previous COP conferences, specifically Glasgow's. This also provides context on why India is taking such a stand.

D: The sentence D, follows A as it builds upon the previous idea of the developed countries avoiding responsibility and gives a specific example, the unfair blaming of coal.

2: The final sentence in the paragraph, this ties everything together by linking the general criticism of India's energy policies, particularly its reliance on coal, back to the actions at the Glasgow conference, which is a subject of the previous sentences.

12. D) PRQS**Option elimination method**

Q doesn't provide any introduction about the stimulus package or its components. Hence, it cannot be the starting sentence.

S refers to a past event and then a corrective measure, indicating it's more of an explanatory or concluding statement and not an introductory one.

From the above analysis, it's clear that P introduces the RBI's actions, R explains the two components, Q explains the second component in detail, and S provides an overview of RBI's actions and the rationale behind its decisions. So, the order is PRQS.

13. B) RSPQ

R: This sentence sets up the context for the entire paragraph. It introduces the main topic, which is India's concern about the neglect from the Western world regarding Khalistani extremist sentiments. Hence, R is the starting sentence

S: Sentence S is connected to R because it provides a specific action taken by India, represented by Dr. S Jaishankar, in response to the neglect mentioned in R. Thus, S logically follows R.

P: After mentioning the specific action taken against Canada in S, sentence P broadens the scope to other Western nations. Hence, P logically comes after S.

Q: This sentence provides context and a possible reason for the need to apply pressure mentioned in sentence P. By mentioning how Western powers have protected Pakistan, it reinforces the idea that the Western nations may be neglecting or ignoring issues that concern India. Thus, Q logically follows P.

14. D) PQSR

P: Sentence P introduces us to the retail inflation data for June and its comparison to May. This establishes the context of the economic data which is a crucial introduction. Hence, P is the starting sentence.

Q: Sentence Q continues on the context set by P, by discussing the inflation average over the first quarter (April-June). Mentioning the data from the entire quarter, right after discussing specific data from June, is a logical continuation. It also connects the data to the Reserve Bank of India's forecast, providing a broader context. Therefore, Q follows P.

S: By using the term "Alongside," it shows that this data is supplementary to the inflation data, and serves as a side note or additional piece of information to the main context.

R: Sentence R hints at potential risks to the macroeconomic environment and brings in a factor (the rains) that could influence future scenarios. After discussing the data in P and Q, it is reasonable to discuss potential implications and future risks

15. B) PSRQ

P & S: Both these sentences talk about the southwest monsoon.

P talks about the deficiency in the rainfall during the first two weeks of the monsoon season.

S talks about the progress made by the monsoon after the first two weeks, by covering the entire country earlier than expected. This naturally follows the statement made in P, where the scenario in the first two weeks is presented.

S & R:

R continues to describe the remarkable progress made by the monsoon as mentioned in S. R further emphasizes the turnaround by stating that the deficiency was not only covered but turned into a surplus.

R & Q:

While R gives a positive overall image of the monsoon, Q provides a slightly contrasting scenario by mentioning areas that are still experiencing deficiencies despite recent showers.

16. C) **QSRP**

Q: Sentence Q introduces the subject, which is the performance of the Indian stock market. This sentence sets the context of the discussion, which is about the Indian stock market's performance.

S: This is a continuation from Q, providing specifics on the performance of the Sensex over the past year.

R: The pronoun "It" likely refers to the Sensex. The introduction of PE (price to earnings) in this sentence provides an acronym/abbreviation clue.

P: P provides details on the performance of the BSE Midcap and smallcap indices, reinforcing the idea introduced in R.

17. B) **Outlay** (noun) – Expenditure, amount, cost, spending, disbursement लागत

'Outlay' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "outlay" का अर्थ होता है financial plan या खर्च की कुल राशि। sentence में mention किया गया है कि Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs ने किसी योजना approve की है जिसकी कुल राशि Rs 3.7 lakh crore है, इसलिए 'Outlay' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'Votary' का अर्थ है supporter or devotee, 'Efficacy' का अर्थ है प्रभावशीलता, और 'Leeway' का अर्थ है छूट या स्वतंत्रता, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

- 'Outlay' should be used because it refers to the total amount of financial plan or expenditure. The sentence mentions that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a scheme with a total financial provision of Rs 3.7 lakh crore, making 'outlay' the fitting choice here. Whereas, 'Votary' means a supporter or devotee, 'Efficacy' means effectiveness, and 'Leeway' signifies freedom or allowance, which are not appropriate in this context.

18. B) **Betterment** (noun) – Improvement, enhancement, advancement, progress, amelioration बेहतरी

'Betterment' का use इसलिए किया जाना चाहिए क्योंकि इसका अर्थ सुधार या उन्नति है। यह passage किसानों के जीवन को बेहतर बनाने और इस context में 'Betterment' को

उपयुक्त बनाने के उद्देश्य से विभिन्न योजनाओं पर चर्चा करता है। जबकि, 'Dissent' का अर्थ disagreement है, 'Assessment' का अर्थ evaluation है, और 'Amendment' का अर्थ change या alteration है, जो इस context में फिट नहीं बैठता है।

- 'Betterment' should be used because it means improvement or enhancement. The passage discusses various schemes aimed at enhancing farmers' lives, making 'betterment' appropriate in this context. Whereas, 'Dissent' implies disagreement, 'Assessment' means evaluation, and 'Amendment' signifies a change or alteration, which don't fit in this context.

19. A) 'Will' सबसे appropriate choice है, क्योंकि sentence future की initiative (the PM-PRANAM) पर चर्चा कर रहा है। will का उपयोग future के इरादे या कार्य को indicate करता है। इस case में, PM-PRANAM future में states को प्रोत्साहित करेगा। 'are' का use करने से पता चलेगा कि program स्वयं अभी प्रोत्साहन दे रहा है, लेकिन यह passage द्वारा सुझाया नहीं गया है। was और 'were' दोनों past में हैं और fit नहीं होते हैं क्योंकि यह passage future की योजना के बारे में बात कर रहा है, न कि किसी ऐसी चीज़ के बारे में जो past में पहले ही पूरी हो चुकी है।

- 'Will' is the most appropriate choice, because the sentence is discussing a future initiative (the PM-PRANAM). The use of "will" indicates a future intention or action. In this case, the PM-PRANAM "will incentivise states" in the future. Using "are" would suggest the program itself is doing the incentivizing right now, but this isn't suggested by the passage. "Was" and "were" are both past tense and don't fit because the passage is speaking about a current and future scheme, not something that has already been completed in the past.

20. C) **Earmark** (verb) – Allocate, designate, reserve, set aside, apportion विशेष प्रयोजन के लिए रखना

'Earmarked' का use इसलिए किया जाना चाहिए क्योंकि इसका मतलब किसी विशिष्ट उद्देश्य के लिए funds अलग रखना या नामित करना है। दूसरी ओर, 'Overlooked' का अर्थ है चूक जाना, जिसका इस context में कोई मतलब नहीं है। 'Marked' के कई अर्थ हो सकते हैं लेकिन funds अलग रखने के context में, यह 'earmarked' जितना सटीक नहीं है।

- 'Earmarked' should be used because it means to set aside or designate funds for a specific purpose. On the other hand, 'Overlooked' implies neglecting or missing out on something, which doesn't make sense in this context. 'Marked' can mean several things but in the context of setting aside funds, it's not as precise as 'earmarked'.

21. D) All tasks are handled efficiently by her.

22. B) They surrendered all weapons.

23. B) 'are assured' के बदले 'have assured' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि वाक्य में बताया जा रहा है कि अधिकारियों ने लोगों को आश्वासन दिया है। 'have assured' Present Perfect Tense का प्रयोग करते हुए यह दिखाता है कि क्रिया (आश्वासन देना) हाल ही में हुई है और इसका प्रभाव अभी भी बना हुआ है। 'are assured' passive voice होता है, जो इस संदर्भ में सही नहीं है। जैसे— The authorities have assured the people that they will look into the matter.

- 'have assured' will be used instead of 'are assured' because the sentence is indicating that the authorities have given assurance to the people. 'have assured' in the Present Perfect Tense indicates that the action (of assuring) has happened recently and its effects are still present. 'are assured' is passive voice, which isn't correct in this context. Like— The authorities have assured the people that they will look into the matter.

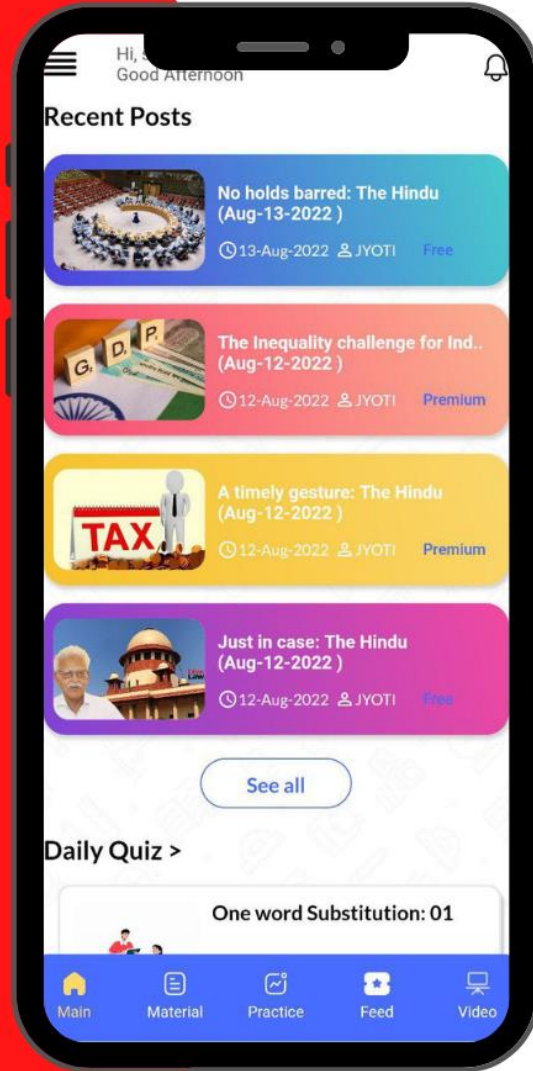
24. D) **Modest** (adjective) – Being unassuming or moderate in the estimation of one's abilities or achievements, humble, unpretentious. विनम्र

Antonym: Conceited (adjective) – Excessively proud of oneself, vain, self-centered, self-admiring. अभिमानी

- **Glum** (adjective) – Looking or feeling dejected, downcast, unhappy, gloomy. उदास
- **Sullen** (adjective) – Bad-tempered and sulky, morose, resentful. चिढ़चिढ़ा
- **Unhappy** (adjective) – Sad, sorrowful, displeased, dejected. दुखी

25. D) **Seismology** (noun) – The scientific study of earthquakes and the propagation of elastic waves through the Earth. भूकंप विज्ञान

- **Geology** (noun) – The science that deals with the Earth's physical structure and substance, its history, and the processes that act on it. भूविज्ञान
- **Geography** (noun) – The study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere, and of human activity as it affects and is affected by these. भूगोल
- **Topography** (noun) – The arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area. प्राकृतिक और कृत्रिम भौतिक विशेषताओं की व्यवस्था



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