

Old beginning: On Pakistan politics

Shehbaz Sharif's political difficulties are **compounded** by the economic crisis

There was no **level playing field** in Pakistan's general elections on February 8, in which **the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf** (PTI), the party of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, **barred** from fielding candidates on its popular cricket bat symbol, **was pitted against** the **military-backed** Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Still, voters **backed** the PTI, whose independents emerged as the largest **bloc** in the National Assembly with 93 seats, while the PML-N **ended up** second with 75 seats. While the results **sprung** a surprise for many, **the post-election manoeuvres** have **hardly** been surprising. The PML-N has joined hands with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and several smaller parties to form a **coalition** government, which leaves out the PTI. **Shehbaz Sharif**, who became Prime Minister as part of an anti-Imran Khan coalition after the cricketer-turned politician's government was **toppled** in a no-confidence vote in April 2022, **will** return to the post. **Maryam Nawaz**, daughter of Nawaz Sharif, leader of the PML-N (Mr. Sharif is the elder brother of Mr. Shehbaz), **has** become the Chief Minister of Punjab, while **Asif Ali Zardari**, the former President and leader of the PPP, **is likely** to replace Pakistan President Arif Alvi (of the PTI). The coalition has the full support of Pakistan's generals, while **the PTI**, which had **accused** the military of **rigging** in dozens of seats, **says** it will stay in opposition and **mount** legal challenges to the **contested** results.

In many ways, the new **alliance** is a **replica** of the previous coalition government. Mr. Shehbaz was widely unpopular as Prime Minister under whose watch Pakistan's economic **woes** have multiplied — inflation stands at a punishing 30%, while the economy is run on a \$3 billion lifeline the IMF provided last year. Foreign exchange reserves, despite improving, still stand at a low of \$8.2 billion. The new government will have to restart talks with the IMF for a **bailout** package. Even if a **deal is reached** quickly, it is not going to be a **magic bullet** for Pakistan's **debt-laden** economy, which is facing repayments worth \$70 billion over the next three years. **Moreover**, the country is also facing growing security challenges in its border region with Afghanistan. **That** Mr. Shehbaz, instead of Mr. Nawaz who had a history of **confrontation** with the military, **was** chosen to lead the coalition suggests that the member parties and the power behind the scene prefer **status quo**. But the voters did not want the status quo. Also, if the military hoped that Mr. Khan and the PTI would be **sidelined** after the election, that is not going to happen. Mr. Shehbaz's challenge is to lead a difficult coalition through **choppy** political **waters** while taking tough decisions to pull the economy out of what he calls "the hole it has fallen into". A **tall ask indeed**.

[Practice Exercise]

- **Reach the deal** (phrase) – to finally agree after discussing or negotiating something. अंततः सहमत होना
- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

Vocabulary

1. **Compound** (verb) – Intensify, worsen, aggravate, amplify, exacerbate बिगाड़ना
2. **Level playing field** (phrase) – Equal opportunity, fair competition, even ground, equal conditions, fair play समान अवसर
3. **Bar** (verb) – Prohibit, exclude, ban, prevent, block रोकना
4. **Pit against** (phrase) – Set against, match up, compete, oppose, confront आमने-सामने करना
5. **Military-backed** (adjective) – Supported by armed forces, army-supported, defense-endorsed सैन्य समर्थित
6. **Back** (verb) – Support, endorse, champion, advocate, promote समर्थन करना
7. **Bloc** (noun) – Alliance, coalition, group, faction, consortium गुट
8. **End up** (phrasal verb) – Conclude, finish, wind up, terminate, result in अंत में होना
9. **Spring** (verb) – Emerge, arise, appear, surface, come forth उभरना
10. **Post-** (prefix) – After, subsequent, following, later, post- पश्चात्
11. **Manoeuvre** (noun) – Strategy, tactic, move, operation, plan चाल
12. **Hardly** (adverb) – Barely, scarcely, rarely, seldom, infrequently मुश्किल से
13. **Coalition** (noun) – Alliance, partnership, union, bloc, confederation गठबंधन
14. **Topple** (verb) – Overthrow, oust, unseat, dethrone, bring down गिराना (सरकार)
15. **Likely** (adjective) – Probable, plausible, possible, expected, anticipated संभावित
16. **Accuse** (of) (verb) – Charge, allege, indict, blame, impeach आरोप लगाना
17. **Rig** (in) (verb) – Manipulate, fix, tamper, falsify, distort हेरफेर करना
18. **Mount** (verb) – establish; set up स्थापित करना
19. **Contested** (adjective) – Disputed, challenged, debated, contested, opposed विवादित
20. **Alliance** (noun) – Coalition, union, partnership, league, confederation संघ
21. **Replica** (noun) – Copy, duplicate, imitation, reproduction, clone प्रतिलिपि
22. **Woes** (noun) – Troubles, problems, difficulties, distress, sorrows मुसीबत
23. **Bailout** (noun) – Financial aid, rescue package, assistance, support package, relief आर्थिक सहायता

24. **Magic bullet** (noun) – Perfect solution, cure-all, panacea, quick fix, remedy
रामबाण उपाय
25. **Debt-laden** (adjective) – Burdened with debt, heavily indebted, in debt, financially troubled कर्ज में डूबा हुआ
26. **Moreover** (noun) – Additionally, furthermore, besides, also, likewise इसके अलावा
27. **Confrontation** (noun) – Conflict, clash, face-off, encounter, showdown टकराव
28. **Status quo** (noun) – Current state, existing condition, present situation, status, current state यथास्थिति
29. **Sideline** (verb) – Marginalize, overlook, ignore, neglect, disregard दरकिनार करना
30. **Choppy waters** (phrase) – Turbulent times, difficult situations, troubled waters, stormy seas, rough seas उथल-पुथल भरा समय
31. **A tall ask/order** (phrase) – Difficult task, challenging request, tough demand, hard task, formidable challenge कठिन मांग
32. **Indeed** (adverb) – Truly, really, certainly, actually, in fact वास्तव में

Summary of the Editorial

1. Pakistan's general elections on February 8 were marred by an uneven playing field, with the PTI barred from using its popular symbol.
2. PTI emerged as the largest bloc in the National Assembly with 93 seats, while PML-N secured 75 seats.
3. The post-election scenario saw PML-N forming a coalition government with PPP and other smaller parties, excluding PTI.
4. Shehbaz Sharif returned as Prime Minister, Maryam Nawaz became Punjab's Chief Minister, and Asif Ali Zardari is likely to replace President Arif Alvi.
5. The coalition government has the support of Pakistan's military, while PTI plans to challenge the election results legally.
6. The new alliance mirrors the previous coalition government, with Shehbaz Sharif facing unpopularity due to economic woes.
7. Pakistan is grappling with high inflation, low foreign exchange reserves, and a reliance on a \$3 billion IMF lifeline.
8. The government needs to negotiate a new bailout package with the IMF amid a debt-laden economy and upcoming repayment obligations.
9. The country also faces security challenges along its border with Afghanistan.
10. The choice of Shehbaz Sharif as the coalition leader indicates a preference for maintaining the status quo.
11. Voters showed a desire for change, contradicting the military's expectations of sidelining PTI and Imran Khan.
12. Shehbaz Sharif's challenge is to lead a difficult coalition while addressing economic and political challenges.
13. The election results and subsequent political maneuvers highlight the complex interplay between the military, political parties, and the electorate in Pakistan.
14. The coalition government's success will depend on its ability to address the economic crisis and navigate political turbulence.
15. The situation underscores the ongoing struggle for democracy and stability in Pakistan, with implications for regional security and international relations.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **Which party emerged as the largest bloc in the National Assembly in Pakistan's general elections on February 8?** [Editorial Page]
 - A. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)
 - B. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)
 - C. Pakistan People's Party (PPP)
 - D. None of the above
2. **Why did Shehbaz Sharif become Prime Minister again after the general elections?**
 - A. He was the most popular candidate.
 - B. He formed a coalition government excluding the PTI.
 - C. He won the majority of seats in the National Assembly.
 - D. He was appointed by the military.
3. **What is one of the major challenges facing the new government in Pakistan?**
 - A. Reducing the popularity of the PTI.
 - B. Increasing the popularity of the PML-N.
 - C. Forming a coalition with the PTI.
 - D. Negotiating a bailout package with the IMF.
4. **What can be inferred about the relationship between the military and the political parties in Pakistan?**
 - A. The military has a significant influence on political outcomes.
 - B. The military is neutral and does not interfere in politics.
 - C. The military is opposed to all political parties.
 - D. The military is solely supportive of the PTI.
5. **What can be inferred about the economic situation in Pakistan from the passage?**
 - A. The economy is thriving with low inflation and high foreign exchange reserves.
 - B. The economy is stable but faces minor challenges.
 - C. The economy is struggling with high inflation and low foreign exchange reserves.
 - D. The economy is entirely dependent on the IMF for survival.
6. Select the option that can be used as a **one-word substitute** for the given group of words.
Place where objects of importance are exhibited
 - A. Fair
 - B. Exhibition
 - C. Treasury
 - D. Museum
7. Select the option that can be used as a **one-word substitute** for the given group of words.
Lacking interest or excitement
 - A. Despot
 - B. Hostile
 - C. Mundane

- D. Miserly
8. Select the **INCORRECTLY** spelt word.
- A. Contemplate
 - B. Cooperate
 - C. Temprate
 - D. Syndicate
9. **The following sentence has been split into four segments. Identify the segment that contains a grammatical error.**
- Will you / care for / a cup of / hot coffee?
- A. care for
 - B. hot coffee
 - C. Will you
 - D. a cup of
10. Select the most appropriate **synonym** of the given word.
- Lull
- A. Disturbance
 - B. Activity
 - C. Noise
 - D. Calm
11. **The following sentence has been divided into parts. One of them may contain a grammatical error. Select the part that contains the error from the given options. If you don't find any error, mark 'No error' as your answer.**
- They had hardly completed / half of the work / than the boss called them.
- A. half of the work
 - B. No error
 - C. They had hardly completed
 - D. than the boss called them
12. Select the most appropriate **antonym** of the given word.
- Multiple
- A. many
 - B. double
 - C. single
 - D. Triple
13. **The following sentence has been split into four segments. Identify the segment that contains a grammatical error.**
- We bought / two dozens / mangoes from / the market.
- A. the market
 - B. We bought
 - C. two dozens
 - D. mangoes from
14. **Sentences of a paragraph are given below in jumbled order. Arrange the sentences in the correct order to form a meaningful and coherent paragraph.**

- A. Thus, shared laughter is one of the most effective tools in maintaining healthy relationships.
B. Emotional sharing builds strong and lasting bonds.
C. It also helps in healing resentments and hurt.
D. But sharing laughter brings joy and freshness to relationships.
- A. BCAD
B. DCBA
C. DCAB
D. BDCA
15. **Select the most appropriate option to substitute the underlined segment in the given sentence. If there is no need to substitute it, select 'No substitution required'.**
It is quite difficult to make on what this doctor writes
- A. make out
B. make in
C. No substitution required
D. made on
16. **Select the option that expresses the given sentence in direct speech.**
She exclaimed with sorrow that life had become miserable
- A. She said, "Oh! What miserable life has become."
B. She said, "Alas! How miserable life has become."
C. She said, "How miserable had become life!"
D. She said, "Life has become miserable."
17. **The following sentence has been split into four segments. Identify the segment that contains a grammatical error.**
My friend / who's leg / was fractured, / has recovered
- A. has recovered
B. My friend
C. who's leg
D. was fractured
18. **Select the most appropriate meaning of the given idiom.**
Have a change of heart
- A. Undergo a surgery
B. Change one's opinion
C. Fall in love with someone
D. Express happiness about something
19. **Select the option that expresses the given sentence in active voice.**
He is given proper guidance by his boss.
- A. His boss is giving him proper guidance.
B. His boss has been giving him proper guidance.
C. He gives proper guidance to his boss.
D. His boss gives him proper guidance.
20. **Select the correct passive voice of the given sentence.**

Hold the rope firmly

- A. Let the rope hold you firmly.
- B. Let the rope firmly hold you.
- C. Let the rope be hold firmly.
- D. Let the rope be held firmly.

Comprehension:

In the following passage, some words have been deleted. Read the passage carefully and select the most appropriate option to fill in each blank.

For an average Indian, driving in any of the major Indian cities is equivalent to (1) _____ a daily war. The everyday struggle of (2) _____ traffic, pollution and rash drivers is (3) _____ biggest cause of chronic stress and other (4) _____ problems. On an average a person spends (5) _____ between thirty minutes to two hours of their day driving

- 21. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank no.1.**
 - A. making
 - B. waging
 - C. raising
 - D. Rushing
- 22. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank no.2.**
 - A. stopping
 - B. dodging
 - C. boarding
 - D. Lodging
- 23. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank no.3.**
 - A. one
 - B. the
 - C. an
 - D. A
- 24. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank no.4.**
 - A. societal
 - B. ecological
 - C. psychological
 - D. Spiritual
- 25. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank no.5.**
 - A. everywhere
 - B. nowhere
 - C. anywhere
 - D. elsewhere

Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]

Explanation

1. B) The passage states that "voters backed the PTI, whose independents emerged as the largest bloc in the National Assembly with 93 seats."
2. B) The passage explains that "Shehbaz Sharif, who became Prime Minister as part of an anti-Imran Khan coalition after the cricketer-turned politician's government was toppled in a no-confidence vote in April 2022, will return to the post." This indicates that his return to the Prime Minister position is due to the formation of a coalition government that excludes the PTI.
3. D) The passage mentions that "The new government will have to restart talks with the IMF for a bailout package." This indicates that one of the major challenges facing the new government is negotiating a bailout package with the IMF to address Pakistan's economic woes.
4. A) The passage suggests that the military-backed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and that the coalition government has the full support of Pakistan's generals. It also mentions that the PTI accused the military of rigging in dozens of seats. These points indicate that the military has a significant influence on political outcomes in Pakistan.
5. C) The passage mentions that under Shehbaz Sharif's watch, Pakistan's economic woes have multiplied, with inflation standing at a punishing 30%, and foreign exchange reserves, despite improving, still standing at a low of \$8.2 billion. This indicates that the economy is struggling with high inflation and low foreign exchange reserves.
6. D) **Museum** (noun) – A place where objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are exhibited. संग्रहालय
 - **Fair** (noun) – A gathering of people for a variety of entertainment and commercial activities, often with temporary stalls and displays. मेला
 - **Exhibition** (noun) – A public display of works of art or items of interest, held in an art gallery or museum or at a trade fair. प्रदर्शनी
 - **Treasury** (noun) – A place where the funds of the government, corporation, or institution are deposited, kept, and disbursed. कोषागार
7. C) **Mundane** (adjective) – Lacking interest or excitement; dull. सांसारिक
 - **Despot** (noun) – a ruler or other person who holds absolute power, typically one who exercises it in a cruel or oppressive way. तानाशाह
 - **Hostile** (adjective) – showing or feeling opposition or dislike; unfriendly. शत्रुतापूर्ण

- **Miserly** (adjective) – of, relating to, or characteristic of a miser; frugal to the point of stinginess. कंजूस
8. C) The incorrectly spelt word is 'Temprate'. The correct spelling is '**Temperate**' (शीतोष्ण).
9. C) 'Would you' should be used instead of 'Will you'. 'Would' is more polite and formal, and is commonly used in formal invitations or offers.
10. D) **Lull** (verb) – It can refer to a temporary period of calm or quiet, a moment of relief from tumult or activity. शांति काल
- Synonym: Calm** – This is the correct synonym. It denotes a period of tranquility, which aligns with the meaning of lull. शांत
- **Disturbance** – This word is the opposite of lull, as it means a commotion or interruption that disturbs peace. अशांति
 - **Activity** – Refers to a state of doing things, being active, which is not synonymous with a state of calm. गतिविधि
 - **Noise** – This is an antonym for lull since noise is sound, especially when loud, while a lull often refers to a reduction in noise. शोर
11. D) '**than**' के बदले 'when' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'hardly' और 'scarcely' के साथ 'when' का प्रयोग होता है, 'than' का नहीं; जैसे— I had hardly started working when the lights went out.
- 'when' will be used instead of 'than' because with 'hardly' and 'scarcely,' we use 'when,' not 'than'; Like— I had hardly started working when the lights went out.
12. C) **Multiple** (adjective) – Having or involving several parts, elements, or members, various, numerous. बहुसंख्यक
- Antonym: Single** (adjective) – Only one; not one of several. एकमात्र
- **Many** (adjective) – A large number of. बहुत सारे
 - **Double** (adjective) – Consisting of two equal, identical, or similar parts or things. दोगुना
 - **Triple** (adjective) – Consisting of three parts; threefold. तिगुना
13. C) '**dozens**' के बदले 'dozen' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'dozen' का प्रयोग गिनती के लिए होता है और जब इसके आगे संख्या लगी हो तो इसे plural में नहीं बदलते; जैसे— I bought two dozen mangoes from the market.
- 'dozen' will be used instead of 'dozens' because 'dozen' is used for counting and when it is preceded by a number, we do not make it plural; Like— I bought two dozen mangoes from the market.
14. D) **BDCA**

Emotional sharing builds strong and lasting bonds But sharing laughter brings joy and freshness to relationships. It also helps in healing resentments and hurt. Thus, shared laughter is one of the most effective tools in maintaining healthy relationships

15. A) '**make out**' का प्रयोग 'make on' के बदले होगा क्योंकि 'make out' का अर्थ होता है किसी चीज को समझना या पहचानना, जबकि 'make on' का कोई प्रचलित अर्थ नहीं है। वाक्य में यह संदर्भ है कि डॉक्टर की लिखावट को समझना कठिन है, इसलिए सही विकल्प 'make out' होगा; जैसे— It is quite difficult to make out the handwriting of this doctor.

- 'make out' will be used instead of 'make on' because 'make out' means to discern or understand something, whereas 'make on' does not have a relevant meaning. In the sentence, the context is about the difficulty in understanding the doctor's handwriting, so the correct option will be 'make out'; Like— It is quite difficult to make out what this doctor writes

16. B) She said, "Alas! How miserable life has become."

17. C) '**who's leg**' के बदले 'whose leg' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'who's' का अर्थ होता है 'who is' या 'who has', जबकि 'whose' का प्रयोग Possessive Case के लिए होता है; जैसे— It is Ram whose bicycle was stolen.

- 'whose leg' will be used instead of 'who's leg' because 'who's' means 'who is' or 'who has', whereas 'whose' is used for showing possession; Like— It is Ram whose bicycle was stolen.

18. B) **Have a change of heart** (idiom) – Change one's opinion **राय में बदलाव**

19. D) His boss gives him proper guidance.

20. D) Let the rope be held firmly.

21. B) '**Waging**' का use होगा क्योंकि "waging" का अर्थ होता है किसी चुनौतीपूर्ण कार्य या संघर्ष में संलग्न होना। Sentence में कहा गया है कि भारतीय शहरों में ड्राइविंग एक दैनिक युद्ध के समान है, इसलिए 'waging' यहाँ सही शब्द है। 'Making' का अर्थ है निर्माण करना या प्रकट करना, 'Raising' का अर्थ है उठाना या बढ़ाना, और 'Rushing' का अर्थ है जल्दी करना या दौड़ना, जो कि इस context में फिट नहीं बैठते।

- '**Waging**' should be used because it refers to engaging in or carrying on a challenging activity or struggle. The sentence likens driving in Indian cities to a daily war, hence 'waging' is the appropriate word here. 'Making' means creating or producing, 'Raising' means lifting or increasing, and 'Rushing' implies hurrying, none of which are suitable in this context

22. B) **dodging**' का use होगा क्योंकि "dodging" का अर्थ होता है किसी चीज से बचकर निकलना या उसे चतुराई से हँडल करना। Sentence में भारतीय शहरों में ड्राइविंग की बात कही गई है जहाँ traffic, pollution और rash drivers से निपटना पड़ता है, इसलिए 'dodging' सही शब्द है। 'Stopping' का अर्थ

है रुकना, 'Boarding' का अर्थ है किसी वाहन पर सवार होना, और 'Lodging' का अर्थ है ठहरना, जो इस context में उपयुक्त नहीं हैं।

- **dodging'** should be used because it means to avoid something by a sudden quick movement or by outmaneuvering. The sentence discusses navigating through traffic, pollution, and rash drivers in Indian cities, which fits with the idea of 'dodging'. 'Stopping' means to come to a halt, 'Boarding' means to get on a vehicle, and 'Lodging' means staying in a place, none of which are appropriate in this context

23. B) **the** का use होगा क्योंकि 'the' एक definite article है जो एक विशेष संदर्भित वस्तु या चीज को दर्शाता है। Sentence में 'biggest cause' के पहले 'the' का प्रयोग हुआ है क्योंकि यहाँ एक विशेष कारण की बात की जा रही है। 'One', 'an', और 'a' indefinite articles हैं जो किसी भी संदर्भित चीज के लिए प्रयोग होते हैं और यहाँ उपयुक्त नहीं हैं क्योंकि विशेषता का संकेत दिया जा रहा है।

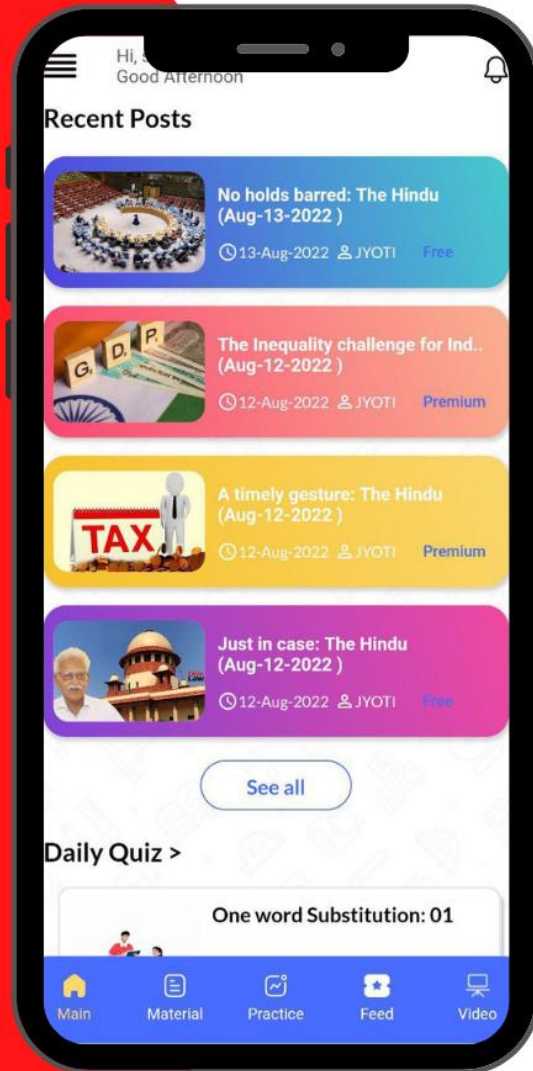
- **the** should be used because 'the' is a definite article used to refer to a specific object or thing that has been previously mentioned or is commonly known. In the sentence, 'the biggest cause' specifies a particular cause, hence 'the' is appropriate. 'One', 'an', and 'A' are indefinite articles used when referring to any member of a group, and are not suitable here as a specific cause is being referenced.

24. C) **Psychological'** का use होगा क्योंकि यहाँ बात उन समस्याओं की हो रही है जो दैनिक यात्रा के तनाव से उत्पन्न होती हैं, जो मुख्य रूप से मानसिक या मनोवैज्ञानिक होती हैं। 'Societal' का अर्थ समाज से संबंधित होता है, 'Ecological' पारिस्थितिकी से संबंधित होता है, और 'Spiritual' का संबंध आध्यात्मिकता से होता है, जो इस संदर्भ में उपयुक्त नहीं हैं।

- **'Psychological'** should be used because it refers to the mental or emotional problems that arise from the stress of daily commuting, which is the main concern here. 'Societal' relates to society, 'Ecological' to the environment, and 'Spiritual' to the realm of spirit or religion, none of which are appropriate in this context.

25. C) **Anywhere'** का use होगा क्योंकि "anywhere" का अर्थ होता है किसी भी स्थान पर या किसी भी सीमा के भीतर। Sentence में कहा गया है कि औसतन एक व्यक्ति अपने दिन का कुछ समय ड्राइविंग में बिताता है जो कि तीस मिनट से दो घंटे के बीच कहीं भी हो सकता है। 'Anywhere' यहाँ सही है। 'Everywhere' का अर्थ है हर जगह, 'Nowhere' का अर्थ है कहीं नहीं, और 'Elsewhere' का अर्थ है और कहीं, जो इस context में सही नहीं बैठते।

- **Anywhere'** should be used because it means at any place or within any limits. The sentence suggests that on average, a person spends some time of their day, which could be anywhere from thirty minutes to two hours, driving. 'Everywhere' means at all places, 'Nowhere' means at no place, and 'Elsewhere' means at another place, which do not fit the context here.



Learn Vocabulary Through Reading Articles

English Madhyam