

Express View on shelving an elephant census: Elephant in the room

A reliable population estimate is a basic **prerequisite** for conserving **endangered** animals. However, **most wildlife**, especially large **mammals**, **is** not easy to survey — the animals are **often camouflaged** or on the move. That's why **enumeration** methods, across the world, have to be refined frequently. In India, **for instance**, the tiger crisis of 2005 **led to** conversations over the procedures to count the majestic animal. Though questions continue to be raised over the exact numbers of the big cat, the Tiger Census today provides a more accurate picture of the status of the animal compared to the early years of this century. Other animals, however, have not received comparable attention. The country's other **charismatic mammal**, the elephant, **is a case in point**. A census is conducted every five years to measure its population. After 2017, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), the surveying agency, changed its method. From relying on direct headcount or dung count of elephants, the WII adopted the statistical modeling approach used to monitor tigers. Its report, which shows a **substantial** decline in the animal's population could well be a **reflection** of the long-term status of the elephant — and not the five years of the Census. The findings could have led to a **debate** on the conservation of the animal, which has come into frequent conflict with humans in the last two **decades**. However, as an investigation by this newspaper shows, government has chosen to shelve the report.

The elephant's **habitat** has **undergone** changes in recent years due to the conversion of forest areas to agriculture and development projects. As the WII report **points out**, fragmentation of habitats "has prompted **long-ranging** elephants to **venture** into unoccupied areas." Unable to find food or **dispersal** areas, the large animals become crop **raiders**. **Population estimates** that map the animal's distribution and herd structure — not just in reserve forests, but also in human-dominated landscapes — **could** be the first step to reduce such conflicts. The data can **spur** discussions on a **viable** population that can share space with humans. The information can also **lay the ground for** eco-sensitive developmental planning.

In 2010, an **Elephant Task Force**, **constituted** by the environment ministry, **advocated** a "robust science-based **assessment** and monitoring" of the large mammals. The then UPA government did not do much by way of working on the panel's recommendations. The NDA government claims that the elephant's status has **stabilised** in the country. Its **prevarication** over the latest survey, however, **casts its efforts in conserving the elephant in poor light** and also **goes** against claims of finding solutions to human-animal conflicts.

[Practice Exercise]

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

Vocabulary

1. **Shelve** (verb) – Postpone, delay, put aside, set aside, table स्थगित करना
2. **Elephant in the room** (phrase) – An obvious problem, issue, or truth that is being ignored, overlooked, or unaddressed महत्वपूर्ण समस्या या मुद्दा
3. **Prerequisite** (noun) – Requirement, necessity, precondition, essential, qualification पूर्व-आवश्यकता
4. **Endangered** (adjective) – At risk, threatened, imperiled, vulnerable, in danger संकटग्रस्त
5. **Mammal** (noun) – Warm-blooded animal, vertebrate, creature, animal, beast स्तनपायी
6. **Often** (adverb) – Frequently, repeatedly, regularly, habitually, commonly अक्सर
7. **Camouflage** (verb) – Disguise, hide, conceal, blend in, mask छुपाना
8. **Enumeration** (noun) – Counting, tallying, listing, numbering, cataloging गणना
9. **For instance** (phrase) – For example, such as, as an example, like, namely उदाहरण के लिए
10. **Lead** (to) (verb) – Cause, result in, bring about, produce, contribute to कारण बनना
11. **Charismatic** (adjective) – Charming, captivating, attractive, magnetic, alluring करिश्माई
12. **A case in point** (phrase) – A good example, relevant example, illustration, instance, representative उदाहरण
13. **Substantial** (adjective) – Significant, considerable, sizeable, large, important पर्याप्त
14. **Reflection** (noun) – Indication, sign, representation, manifestation, illustration प्रतिबिंब
15. **Debate** (noun) – Discussion, argument, discourse, controversy, contention बहस
16. **Decade** (noun) – A period of ten years दशक
17. **Habitat** (noun) – Environment, natural surroundings, territory, home, ecosystem आवास
18. **Undergo** (verb) – Experience, go through, endure, face, bear गुजरना
19. **Point out** (phrasal verb) – Indicate, show, highlight, mention, bring up इंगित करना
20. **Long-ranging** (adjective) – Far-reaching, extensive, widespread, lengthy, long-term व्यापक

21. **Venture** (into) (verb) – Dare to enter, risk, embark on, attempt, explore प्रवेश करना
22. **Dispersal** (adjective) – Distribution, spreading, scattering, dissemination, allocation बिखराव
23. **Raider** (noun) – Invader, attacker, looter, marauder, plunderer आक्रमणकारी
24. **Spur** (verb) – Encourage, stimulate, inspire, prompt, incite प्रेरित करना
25. **Viable** (adjective) – Feasible, workable, practical, possible, achievable व्यावहारिक
26. **Lay the ground for** (phrase) – Prepare for, pave the way for, set up, establish, make ready मार्ग प्रशस्त करना
27. **Constitute** (verb) – Form, establish, set up, create, organize गठित करना
28. **Advocate** (verb) – Support, recommend, back, champion, promote समर्थन करना
29. **Robust** (adjective) – Strong, sturdy, vigorous, powerful, sound मजबूत
30. **Assessment** (noun) – Evaluation, judgment, appraisal, analysis, estimation मूल्यांकन
31. **Stabilise** (verb) – Make steady, make stable, balance, secure, strengthen स्थिर करना
32. **Prevarication** (noun) – Evasion, avoidance, lying, misleading, deception टालमटोल
33. **Cast something in a poor light** (phrase) – Show in a negative way, present negatively, give a bad impression, tarnish, discredit बुरी छवि में दिखाना

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based**[Editorial page]**

1. **What is the tone of the passage?**
 - A. Optimistic
 - B. Critical
 - C. Laudatory
 - D. Neutral
2. **Which of the following can be inferred from the passage about the Wildlife Institute of India's (WII) census method?**
 - A. The WII has completely abandoned traditional methods of elephant population estimation.
 - B. The current method employed by WII is considered less reliable than previous methods.
 - C. The statistical modeling approach used in tiger surveys was adopted to improve accuracy in elephant census.
 - D. The WII's reports are always accepted by the government without scrutiny.
3. **The government's decision to shelve the report indicates its _____ towards addressing the long-term status of elephant conservation**
 - A. indifference
 - B. commitment
 - C. enthusiasm
 - D. approval
4. **According to the passage, the conversion of forest areas to agriculture and development projects has had no impact on the elephant's habitat.**
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Cannot be determined
 - D. Partially true
5. **Select the antonym of "prevarication" as used in the passage.**
 - A. Honesty
 - B. Evasion
 - C. Hesitation
 - D. Delay
6. **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. I started reporting on the State's GPS — governance, politics, and society — there has not been a dull day
 - B. Maharashtra, the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, is a relentless battleground of political activity
 - C. New controversies often arise before the previous ones have even begun to cool down
 - D. In the two years since
 - A. BDAC
 - B. CABD
 - C. CADB

D. ABCD

7. Sentences of a paragraph are given below in jumbled order. Arrange the sentences in the correct order to form a meaningful and coherent paragraph.

P. which assign ranks to universities across the world every year

Q. In this digital age, we reduce everything to numbers

R. India has its own National Institutional Ranking Framework to rank universities in the country

S. This trend has consumed the education ecosystem, as seen in the rise of global ranking agencies,

A. RSPQ

B. QSPR

C. QRPS

D. RQPS

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.

The disclaimer read that no animals were harmed (1)_____ the filming of that scene.

However, they forgot that the brand of lipstick that was applied (2)_____ the heroines lips for that scene was manufactured from crushed cochineal bugs, which release a pigment commonly used in red lipstick. The other items in the film studio (3)_____ used animal fats during their manufacturing. The actors who (4)_____ that they are vegan in past interviews are unaware of their indirect involvement in such acts of cruelty against animals.

The indirect cruelty against animals does not stop here. For example, the extensive disposal of plastic waste in oceans has made plastic a part of the animal food chain, which is detrimental (5)_____ our entire ecosystem

8. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 1.

A. during

B. around

C. for

D. from

9. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 2.

A. upon

B. on

C. over

D. to

10. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 3.

A. least

B. too

C. also

D. long

11. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 4.

- A. were confessing
- B. confessed
- C. had confessed
- D. are confessing

12. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 5.

- A. in
- B. for
- C. to
- D. on

13. Select the most appropriate option that can substitute the underlined word in the given sentence.

There was enough room in the spacious flat for all of our furniture

- A. tiny
- B. cozy
- C. cramped
- D. roomy

14. Select the most appropriate option to substitute the underlined segment in the following sentence.

A gift from my teacher on the eve of the new year was a complete surprise.

- A. a bolt from the blue
- B. like striking one's colours
- C. like a cat on hot bricks
- D. spilling of beans

15. Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank.

The teacher asked the students to _____ attention towards the instructions given for the project

- A. pay
- B. keen
- C. had
- D. make

16. Select the INCORRECTLY spelt word.

- A. Pronunciation
- B. Dissociation
- C. Denunciation
- D. Clandestine

17. Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the underlined word.

The army advanced into enemy territory.

- A. Protruded
- B. Arose
- C. Retreated
- D. Commuted

18. Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the underlined word in the given sentence.

The company has to be able to compete globally

- A. Attack
- B. Impede
- C. Support
- D. Pervert

19. 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'.

There is an old rivalry between the three families for ages

- A. of the three families
- B. No substitution required
- C. in the three families
- D. among the three families

20. Read the given sentence carefully. Change the meaning of the sentence by replacing the underlined word with its ANTONYM from the following options.

William Shakespeare is considered to be the most celebrated dramatist in the world of literature

- A. laureate
- B. inglorious
- C. acclaimed
- D. illustrious

21. Which of the following sentences contains the ANTONYM of the word 'important'?

- A. You always make me do all the trivial stuff.
- B. Namita also makes some very salient points in her newly revised preface.
- C. I have some urgent questions for you.
- D. Choose the right colour to make your bike stand out!

22. Select the option that will improve the underlined part of the given sentence.

It is my custom to get up early in the morning.

- A. perfection
- B. oddity
- C. addiction
- D. habit

23. Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the underlined word in the sentence.

She was asked by the elders to wear a skirt covering her knees.

- A. Expecting
- B. Exposing
- C. Expanding
- D. Expounding

24. Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the given word

Abundance

- A. Scarcity

- B. Fortune
- C. Prosperity
- D. Excitement

25. **Select the correct spelling of the underlined word in the following sentence.**

I am in a hurry so I will see you tomorow.

- A. tomorrow
- B. tomoorow
- C. tomoorow
- D. toomorow

Answers

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

[\[Practice Exercise\]](#)

Explanations

1. B) Critical

B: The tone of the passage is critical because it highlights the shortcomings in the government's approach towards the conservation of elephants. The passage criticizes the decision to shelve the report and points out the negligence in adopting recommendations that could have addressed the human-animal conflict.

A: Incorrect because the passage does not express hope or positivity. Instead, it emphasizes issues and negligence in handling the elephant census.

C: Incorrect because the passage does not praise the actions of the government or the agencies involved.

D: Incorrect because the passage takes a definitive stance by criticizing the shelving of the report, which is not neutral.

2. C) The statistical modeling approach used in tiger surveys was adopted to improve accuracy in elephant census.

C is correct because the passage mentions that the WII adopted the statistical modeling approach, which was previously used in tiger surveys, to improve the reliability of the elephant census data.

A is incorrect because the passage does not state that traditional methods like headcount or dung count have been completely abandoned; instead, they are complemented by statistical modeling.

B is incorrect because the passage suggests that the new method is likely more accurate, not less reliable.

D is incorrect because the passage explicitly states that the government has shelved the report, indicating that WII's findings are not always accepted without scrutiny.

3. A) indifference

A is correct because the word "indifference" best fits the context of the government's lack of action regarding the report, indicating a disregard for addressing the long-term status of elephant conservation.

B is incorrect because "commitment" suggests a proactive stance, which is contradicted by the government's shelving of the report.

C is incorrect because "enthusiasm" would imply an eagerness to address the issue, whereas the passage shows the opposite.

D is incorrect because "approval" suggests agreement or support, which is not conveyed in the passage.

4. B) False

The passage clearly states that the elephant’s habitat has undergone changes due to the conversion of forest areas to agriculture and development projects. This indicates that the conversion has indeed affected their habitat.

A is incorrect because the passage indicates a significant impact.

C is incorrect because there is sufficient information in the passage to determine the impact.

D is incorrect as the statement is not partially true, but entirely false.

5. A) **Honesty**

The word “prevarication” means to avoid telling the truth or to speak in an evasive manner. Its antonym would be “honesty,” which means being truthful and straightforward.

B is incorrect because “evasion” is a synonym of prevarication, not an antonym.

C is incorrect because “hesitation” indicates uncertainty, which is not the opposite of prevarication.

D is incorrect because “delay” refers to being late, which is unrelated to truthfulness.

6. A) **BDAC**

B: The paragraph begins with B, as it introduces Maharashtra as a dynamic state with a constant buzz of political activity, setting the context for the rest of the discussion.

D: D follows B, giving a specific timeframe of "two years" since the author started reporting on the state’s affairs.

A: A comes next, elaborating on the author’s experience, stating that since they started reporting on Maharashtra’s GPS (Governance, Politics, and Society), there has not been a single dull day.

C: C concludes the paragraph by mentioning that new controversies often arise before the previous ones have even cooled down, emphasizing the continuous and relentless nature of political developments in Maharashtra.

7. B) **QSPR**

Q: The paragraph begins with Q, as it introduces the general idea that in the digital age, we tend to reduce everything to numbers. This sets the context for the discussion and hints at the ranking systems that are prevalent today.

S: S logically follows Q because it elaborates on the trend mentioned in Q by stating that this tendency has affected the education ecosystem. It introduces the rise of global ranking agencies, which is a direct consequence of reducing everything to numbers.

P: P follows S by providing additional information about what these global ranking agencies do—they assign ranks to universities across the world every year. This sentence adds depth and clarity to the information in S.

R: R concludes the paragraph by mentioning that India also has its own ranking system—the National Institutional Ranking Framework—to rank universities within the country. This links back to the global trend mentioned in S and P, and provides a specific example of how India is part of this global phenomenon.

8. A) '**During**' का use होगा क्योंकि "during" का अर्थ होता है किसी गतिविधि या घटना के समय के दौरान। sentence में mention किया गया है कि फिल्मों के समय जानवरों को कोई

नुकसान नहीं पहुँचाया गया था, इसलिए 'during' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'Around' का अर्थ है आस-पास या करीब, 'For' का अर्थ है किसी उद्देश्य के लिए, और 'From' का अर्थ है किसी स्रोत से, जो इस संदर्भ में सही नहीं है।

9. D) 'To' का use होगा क्योंकि "to" का अर्थ होता है किसी वस्तु या व्यक्ति पर या किसी दिशा में किसी चीज़ को apply करना। sentence में mention किया गया है कि लिपस्टिक हीरोइन के होठों पर लगाई गई थी, इसलिए 'to' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'Upon' का अर्थ है सतह पर होना, 'On' का अर्थ है सतह पर या किसी वस्तु के ऊपर होना, और 'Over' का अर्थ है ऊपर लेकिन यह यहाँ सही नहीं है।

- 'To' will be used because it means applying something to an object or person, or towards a direction. The sentence mentions that the lipstick was applied to the heroine's lips, making 'to' appropriate here. Whereas, 'Upon' means on a surface, 'On' means on a surface or on top of something, and 'Over' means above but doesn't fit here.

10. C) 'Also' का use होगा क्योंकि "also" का अर्थ होता है "भी"। sentence में mention किया गया है कि अन्य items भी manufacturing के दौरान animal fats का उपयोग करते हैं, इसलिए 'also' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'least' का अर्थ है कम से कम, 'too' का अर्थ है भी लेकिन यह 'also' जितना formal नहीं है, और 'long' का अर्थ लंबा है, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

- 'Also' will be used because it means "too" or "in addition". The sentence mentions that other items in the film studio were also made using animal fats during their manufacturing, making 'also' fitting here. Whereas 'least' means at least, 'too' also means "too" but is less formal than 'also', and 'long' means long, which don't fit in this context.

11. B) 'Confessed' का use होगा क्योंकि यह simple past tense है, जो indicate करता है कि action (confessing) interviews के दौरान हुआ था। sentence में past interviews का जिक्र है जिसमें actors ने vegan होने का दावा किया था, इसलिए 'confessed' सही है। जबकि 'were confessing' continuous tense में है, जो इस context में सही नहीं है, 'had confessed' past perfect है जो indicate करता है कि confessing interviews के पहले हुआ था, और 'are confessing' present continuous है, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

- 'Confessed' will be used because it is in the simple past tense, indicating that the action (confessing) happened during the interviews. The sentence mentions past interviews where actors claimed to be vegan, hence 'confessed' is correct. Whereas 'were confessing' is in continuous tense, which doesn't fit this context, 'had confessed' is past perfect indicating confessing happened before the interviews, and 'are confessing' is present continuous, which doesn't fit in this context.

12. C) **To'** का use होगा क्योंकि 'to' का अर्थ होता है किसी चीज़ की दिशा में या उसे प्रभावित करना। sentence में mention किया गया है कि plastic waste हमारे entire ecosystem को प्रभावित कर रहा है, इसलिए 'to' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'in' का अर्थ होता है अंदर या भीतर, 'for' का अर्थ होता है लिए, और 'on' का अर्थ होता है पर, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

- **'To'** will be used because it means in the direction of or affecting something. The sentence mentions that plastic waste is affecting our entire ecosystem, making 'to' fitting here. Whereas, 'in' means inside or within, 'for' means for, and 'on' means on, which don't fit in this context.

13. D) **'roomy'** का use 'spacious' के बदले होगा क्योंकि 'roomy' 'spacious' का एक पर्यायवाची है, जो दोनों पर्याप्त स्थान का संकेत देते हैं। 'tiny,' 'cozy,' और 'cramped' जैसे विकल्प पर्याप्त स्थान की भावना नहीं व्यक्त करते हैं।

- **'roomy'** will be used instead of 'spacious' because 'roomy' is a synonym for 'spacious,' both indicating ample space. Like— There was enough room in the roomy flat for all of our furniture.

14. A) **a bolt from the blue** (idiom) – A complete surprise; something unexpected. पूरी तरह से अप्रत्याशित घटना या आश्चर्य।

- **Like striking one's colours** (idiom) – To surrender or give up. हार मान लेना या आत्मसमर्पण करना।
- **Like a cat on hot bricks** (idiom) – Very nervous or restless. बहुत घबराया हुआ या बेचैन होना।
- **Spilling the beans** (idiom) – To reveal a secret. किसी रहस्य का खुलासा करना।

15. A) "Pay attention" is a standard collocation used to express the idea of focusing on or giving one's attention to something.

16. A) The correct spelling of 'Pronounciation' is 'Pronunciation' which means "the way in which a word is pronounced" उच्चारण

17. C) **Advanced** (verb) – To move forward, proceed, push forward. प्रगति करना

Antonym: **Retreated** (verb) – To move back, withdraw, pull back. पीछे हटना

- **Protruded** (verb) – Extended beyond or above a surface, stuck out. निकला हुआ
- **Arose** (verb) – Emerged, came into being, got up. उठा हुआ
- **Commutated** (verb) – Traveled regularly between two places, especially between home and work. आना-जाना करना

18. C) **Compete** (verb) – Strive to gain or win something by defeating or establishing superiority over others, contend, vie, rival. प्रतिस्पर्धा करना

Antonym: Support (verb) – Give assistance to, help, back up, aid. समर्थन करना, सहारा देना

- **Attack** (verb) – Take aggressive action against, assault, strike, charge. हमला करना
- **Impede** (verb) – Delay or prevent by obstructing them, hinder, obstruct, hamper. बाधा डालना
- **Pervert** (verb) – Alter something from its original course, meaning, or state to a distortion or corruption of what was first intended, corrupt, distort. विकृत करना

19. D) **between** के बदले 'among' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'among' का प्रयोग तीन या तीन से अधिक वस्तुओं या व्यक्तियों के बीच संबंध दिखाने के लिए होता है, जबकि 'between' का प्रयोग केवल दो वस्तुओं या व्यक्तियों के बीच संबंध दिखाने के लिए होता है; जैसे— There is an old rivalry among the three families for ages.

- **'among'** will be used instead of 'between' because 'among' is used to show relationships involving three or more objects or persons, whereas 'between' is used for relationships involving only two objects or persons; Like— There is an old rivalry among the three families for ages.

20. B) **Celebrated** (adjective) – Renowned, famous, acclaimed, distinguished. प्रशंसित/ प्रख्यात

Antonym: Inglorious (adjective) – Not famous or renowned, dishonorable, shameful. अकीर्तिकर/ लज्जाजनक

- **Laureate** (noun/adjective) – A person who is honored with an award for outstanding achievement, especially in the arts or sciences, prizewinner, honored. पुरस्कार विजेता
- **Acclaimed** (adjective) – Publicly praised, celebrated, renowned. प्रशंसित
- **Illustrious** (adjective) – Well-known, respected, and admired for past achievements, eminent, famous. विख्यात

21. A) **Important** (adjective) – Of great significance or value, crucial, essential, necessary. महत्वपूर्ण

Antonym: Trivial (adjective) – Of little value or importance, insignificant, minor. तुच्छ

- **Salient** (adjective) – Most noticeable or important, prominent, conspicuous. महत्वपूर्ण
- **Urgent** (adjective) – Requiring immediate action or attention, pressing, critical. अत्यावश्यक
- **Stand out** (verb) – To be noticeable or prominent, attract attention. ध्यान आकर्षित करना

22. D) **Custom** (noun) – A traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place, or time. रीति

Improvement: **Habit** (noun) – A settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up. आदत

- **Perfection** (noun) – The condition, state, or quality of being free or as free as possible from all flaws or defects. सिद्धि
- **Oddity** (noun) – A strange or peculiar person, thing, or trait. विचित्रता
- **Addiction** (noun) – The fact or condition of being addicted to a particular substance, thing, or activity. लत

23. B) **Covering** (verb) – Putting something on top of or in front of something to conceal it, hide, shield, protect. ढकना

Antonym: Exposing (verb) – Making something visible, revealing, uncovering, showing. उजागर करना

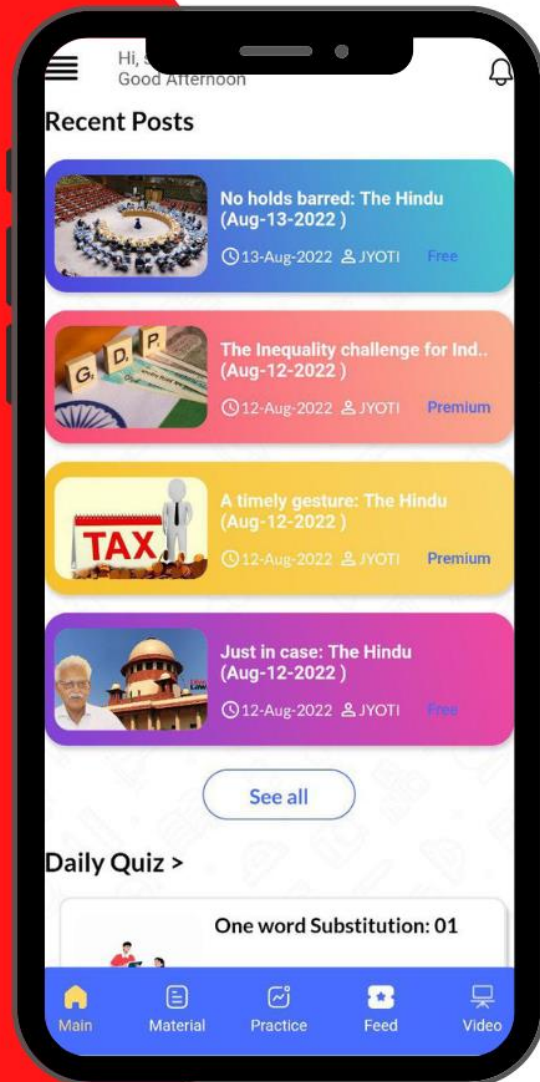
- **Expecting** (verb) – Awaiting, anticipating, looking forward to. प्रत्याशा करना
- **Expanding** (verb) – Becoming larger, increasing, extending. विस्तार करना
- **Expounding** (verb) – Explaining in detail, elaborating, elucidating. विस्तार से समझाना

24. A) **Abundance** (noun) – A very large quantity of something; plenty, profusion, wealth. प्रचुरता

Antonym: Scarcity (noun) – The state of being scarce or in short supply; shortage, lack, deficiency. कमी, अभाव

- **Fortune** (noun) – Luck, destiny, wealth, riches. भाग्य, संपत्ति
- **Prosperity** (noun) – The state of being prosperous; wealth, success, affluence. समृद्धि
- **Excitement** (noun) – A feeling of great enthusiasm and eagerness; thrill, stimulation. उत्तेजना, रोमांच

25. A) The correct spelling of 'tomorrow' is '**tomorrow**' which means "the day after today" कल



Learn Vocabulary Through Reading Articles

English Madhyam