

Shifting sands: On the defence agreement between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan

India's West Asia policy must maintain a **strategic** balance

The **signing** of a **mutual** defence agreement between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which declares that “any **aggression** ... shall be considered an aggression against both”, **is** a moment of consequence for both countries as well as for West and South Asia. **Saudi Arabia**, the **custodian** of Islam's two **holiest mosques**, and **Pakistan**, the Islamic world's only nuclear power, **have** always enjoyed a special relationship. Pakistan has trained Saudi forces for **decades**, while the kingdom has provided **generous** financial **assistance**, including help for Islamabad's nuclear programme. With the agreement, this partnership has now been **institutionalised**. Yet, **its timing**, announced a week after Israel **bombed** Qatar, **underlines** the shifting sands in the Persian Gulf's security **landscape**. For **decades**, its **monarchies** **relied on** solid security guarantees from the U.S. But with the U.S. focus shifting away from West Asia, the **durability** of the old framework **has come into question**. When Saudi oil installations were attacked by Iranian **allies** in 2019, the U.S. did nothing. Israel's **attack** on Qatar, which hosts America's largest base in West Asia, **seems** to have **expedited** the **realignment**.

In the **Abraham Accords**, the U.S. tried to bring the Arab monarchies and Israel closer to build a common **front** against Iran. Four Arab countries, including the UAE, signed up, and Saudi Arabia was expected to follow. But **the Hamas attack** of October 7, 2023 and Israel's **Gaza war**, which has **spilled into** other countries, **have derailed** the process. With the Pakistan agreement, Saudi Arabia is sending a clear signal to Washington and Tel Aviv that it is **diversifying** its security **alliances**. For Pakistan, which **desperately** needs Saudi financial **assistance**, closer defence ties at a time when Gulf monarchies are **rattled** by Israel's **unchecked militarism**, is an opportunity to present itself as a security provider. For India, which fought with Pakistan in May, the agreement could **complicate** its **manoeuvres** in West Asia. As India has taken a **pro-Israel tilt**, Arab monarchies seem to be **hedging their bets**, even if that means **overlooking** India's concerns. Yet, it is not clear whether the agreement offers Pakistan's **nuclear umbrella** to Saudi Arabia or an immediate Saudi response if Pakistan comes under attack. **Risks of entrapment** **come** with the agreement: Pakistan could be **dragged** into West Asia's **polycrisis** or Saudi Arabia could be pulled into the tensions in South and Central Asia. India must prepare for **rapid** changes in West Asia's security order. It might be **tempted to double down on** its tilt towards an **isolated**, dangerous Israel. That would be a mistake. Instead, India's long-term focus should be on promoting stability in the region, and maintaining a strategic balance among all **pillars** of its West Asia policy.

[Practice Exercise]

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

Vocabulary

1. **Shifting sands** (phrase) – changing and unstable situation बदलती परिस्थितियाँ
2. **Strategic** (adjective) – planned, tactical, calculated, deliberate, purposeful रणनीतिक
3. **Mutual** (adjective) – shared, common, reciprocal, joint, collective पारस्परिक
4. **Aggression** (noun) – attack, hostility, assault, invasion, violence आक्रामकता
5. **Custodian** (noun) – guardian, keeper, protector, steward, caretaker संरक्षक
6. **Holiest** (adjective) – most sacred, divine, blessed, sanctified, consecrated सबसे पवित्र
7. **Mosque** (noun) – masjid, place of worship, Islamic temple, prayer hall, shrine मस्जिद
8. **Decade** (noun) – Period of ten years दशक
9. **Generous** (adjective) – liberal, charitable, magnanimous, benevolent, kind उदार
10. **Assistance** (noun) – help, aid, support, backing, cooperation सहायता
11. **Institutionalise** (verb) – establish, formalize, standardize, entrench, systematize संस्थागत करना
12. **Bomb** (verb) – attack, shell, strike, assault, bombard बम गिराना
13. **Underline** (verb) – emphasize, stress, highlight, accentuate, underscore ज़ोर देना
14. **Landscape** (noun) – setting, environment, terrain, scene, background परिदृश्य
15. **Monarchy** (noun) – kingdom, empire, sovereignty, dynasty, royal rule राजतंत्र
16. **Rely** (on) (verb) – depend on, trust in, count on, bank on, lean on भरोसा करना
17. **Durability** (noun) – strength, resilience, permanence, endurance, stability स्थायित्व
18. **Come into question** (phrase) – to become doubtful, uncertain, or questionable संदेह के घेरे में आना
19. **Ally** (noun) – partner, supporter, friend, associate, confederate सहयोगी
20. **Expedite** (verb) – accelerate, hasten, quicken, speed up, advance तेज़ करना
21. **Realignment** (noun) – reorganization, restructuring, rearrangement, reshaping, adjustment पुनः संरेखण
22. **Abraham Accord** (noun) – agreement between Israel and some Arab nations to normalize relations अब्राहम समझौता
23. **Front** (noun) – position, line, battlefield, face, stance मोर्चा / स्थिति

24. **Spill** (into) (verb) – extend, spread, overflow, pour into, seep into फैलना
25. **Derail** (verb) – obstruct, ruin, spoil, hinder, thwart बिगाड़ना
26. **Diversify** (verb) – vary, broaden, expand, spread out, branch out विविधता लाना
27. **Alliance** (noun) – partnership, coalition, union, pact, association गठबंधन
28. **Desperately** (adverb) – urgently, badly, severely, intensely, gravely बेतहाशा
29. **Rattle** (verb) – unsettle, disturb, frighten, unnerve, agitate हिला देना / परेशान करना
30. **Unchecked** (adjective) – uncontrolled, unrestrained, rampant, unmonitored, unregulated अनियंत्रित
31. **Militarism** (noun) – military dominance, war-mindedness, armed aggression, force orientation, bellicism सैन्यवाद
32. **Complicate** (verb) – confuse, entangle, muddle, obstruct, worsen जटिल बनाना
33. **Manoeuvre** (noun) – strategy, tactic, move, operation, plan चाल / रणनीति
34. **Pro-Israel** (noun) – supporter of Israel, advocate of Israeli policy, Israel-leaning व्यक्ति या नीति इज़राइल समर्थक
35. **Tilt** (noun) – inclination, leaning, tendency, bias, orientation झुकाव
36. **Hedge one's bet** (phrase) – to reduce risk by taking multiple options or precautions सुरक्षा उपाय रखना
37. **Overlook** (verb) – ignore, disregard, neglect, miss, bypass अनदेखा करना
38. **Nuclear Umbrella** (noun) – a guarantee from a country or state that possesses nuclear weapons to a country that does not that they will defend them.
39. **Entrapment** (noun) – capture, ensnaring, confinement, trick, entanglement फँसाव
40. **Drag** (into) (verb) – pull, involve, draw in, force into, entangle घसीटना / खींचना
41. **Polycrisis** (noun) – multiple interconnected crises बहु-संकट
42. **Rapid** (adjective) – quick, fast, swift, speedy, prompt तेज़ / शीघ्र
43. **Tempted** (adjective) – attracted, lured, enticed, persuaded, inclined ललचाया हुआ / प्रलोभित
44. **Double down on** (phrase) – to increase one's commitment or effort in something और अधिक ज़ोर देना
45. **Isolated** (adjective) – alone, separated, detached, cut-off, solitary अलग-थलग
46. **Pillar** (noun) – support, foundation, mainstay, base, cornerstone स्तंभ

Summary of the Editorial

1. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have signed a mutual defence agreement, pledging joint response to any aggression.
2. This pact formalises a long-standing special relationship between the two nations.
3. Pakistan has historically trained Saudi forces, while Saudi Arabia has provided financial and nuclear support to Islamabad.
4. The timing of the agreement, coming soon after Israel's bombing of Qatar, highlights shifts in West Asia's security order.
5. U.S. dominance in Gulf security is weakening as Washington's focus shifts away from West Asia.
6. The 2019 attack on Saudi oil facilities by Iran's allies exposed the limits of U.S. protection.
7. Israel's unchecked militarism, including the Qatar attack, has accelerated regional realignment.
8. The Abraham Accords aimed to unite Arab monarchies and Israel against Iran, but the Gaza war derailed this process.
9. By aligning with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia is signalling to the U.S. and Israel that it seeks diversified security partnerships.
10. For Pakistan, the deal strengthens its position as a security provider while ensuring continued Saudi financial aid.
11. The agreement creates risks of entrapment, potentially dragging Pakistan into West Asia's conflicts or Saudi Arabia into South Asian tensions.
12. For India, which recently clashed with Pakistan, the deal complicates its West Asia strategy.
13. India's pro-Israel tilt contrasts with Arab monarchies' hedging strategies, creating diplomatic challenges.
14. New uncertainties arise over whether the pact includes Pakistan's nuclear umbrella for Saudi Arabia.
15. The editorial urges India to avoid overcommitting to Israel and instead focus on regional stability and strategic balance in West Asia.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What type of pronoun is the word “it” in the sentence:**

[Editorial page]

“Yet, its timing, announced a week after Israel bombed Qatar, underlines the shifting sands in the Persian Gulf’s security landscape.”

- A. Demonstrative pronoun
- B. Reflexive pronoun
- C. Personal pronoun
- D. Possessive pronoun

2. **Identify the sentence with correct subject-verb agreement.**

- A. “Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has always enjoyed a special relationship.”
- B. “Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have always enjoyed a special relationship.”
- C. “The monarchies of the Gulf has relied on U.S. guarantees for decades.”
- D. “The monarchies of the Gulf was relying on U.S. guarantees for decades.”

3. **Direction: Read the statement below and choose the correct option.**

Statement: “The passage states that Saudi Arabia signed the defence agreement with Pakistan immediately after the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023.”

- A. True
- B. Cannot be determined
- C. False
- D. Partially true

4. **According to the passage, what main signal is Saudi Arabia sending to Washington and Tel Aviv by signing the defence agreement with Pakistan?**

- A. It is committing to the Abraham Accords and closer alignment with Israel.
- B. It is diversifying its security alliances beyond reliance on the U.S.
- C. It is publicly offering Saudi territory as a new U.S. military base.
- D. It is formally transferring Pakistan’s nuclear weapons to Saudi control.

5. **Which of the following points does the passage identify as uncertain or not clear about the Saudi–Pakistan defence agreement?**

- A. Whether the agreement offers Pakistan’s nuclear umbrella to Saudi Arabia or guarantees an immediate Saudi response if Pakistan is attacked.
- B. That the agreement institutionalises the long-standing special relationship between the two countries.
- C. That Pakistan has trained Saudi forces for decades and Saudi has provided financial assistance.
- D. That the agreement eliminates the risk of Pakistan being drawn into West Asia’s polycrisis.

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) The Covid-19 pandemic can be ascribed with advancing more new learning trends that are enduring, even though the pandemic is nearly over.
- B) The submerging of e-learning in the educational process has resulted in an indisputable decrease in attention span.
- C) E-learning or online learning is undoubtedly a trend that will persist even after the pandemic ends, simply as it provides so many benefits.

- D) The attention span of learners has been restricted to 18 to 20 minutes (approx.) during the Covid-19 phase.
- A. ABDC
B. DBAC
C. DBCA
D. ACBD
7. **Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words.**
Argue loudly about unimportant things
A. Maintain
B. Disagree
C. Agree
D. Squabble
8. **Select the option that expresses the given sentence in indirect speech.**
Jatin said, "I was at home yesterday
A. Jatin said he was at home the day before.
B. Jatin said that he had been at home the day before.
C. Jatin said that he was at home yesterday.
D. Jatin said he was at home.
9. **Select the best express Synonym of the given highlighted word.**
A teacher can mould the character of students in their formative years.
A. Destroy
B. Shape
C. Break
D. Shatter
10. **Directions: Each sentence has three underlined parts labelled (a), (b), and (c). Find out whether there is an error in any underlined part and indicate your answer accordingly. If you find no error, your answer should be (d).**
(a) This is a strange world/(b) where each one pursues their own golden bubble/(c) and laughs at others for doing the same./ (d) No error.
A. This is a strange world
B. where each one pursues their own golden bubble
C. and laughs at others for doing the same.
D. No error.
11. **Select the most appropriate idiom for the underlined segment in the following sentence.**
Meera is not qualified much but has the art of speaking.
A. Gift of the gab
B. Hope against hope
C. An acid tongue
D. A lick of paint
12. **Select the best express Synonym of the given highlighted word.**
Great leaders inspire others to transcend their limitations.
A. Surpass
B. Fall
C. Sink

- D. Decline
13. **Select the correct spelling of the highlighted word in the following sentence.**
You must not **abandone** your dreams.
- A. abandone
 - B. abandon
 - C. abbandon
 - D. abendone
14. **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) Thanks to the enormous balance sheets, Big Tech has historically been a resilient industry, absorbing most of the economic shocks.
- A) As the growth-oriented technology industry confronts one of its worst contractions, with mass layoffs over the span of a few months, there is a sense of panic and anxiety.
- B) It is also considered a bellwether for decisions on corporate spending and hiring.
- C) Facing criticism, the tech giants are projecting the staff sackings as a course correction following a period of aggressive scaling up and bolstering of workforce during the pandemic.
- D) The shakeout is being viewed as an instance of social contagion — companies imitating what others are doing.
- 2) Amid predictions of a recession and a severe economic downturn in the West, the belt-tightening, it is argued, sends a message to shareholders of putting the brakes on any needless spending. The jury is out on whether the approach is prudent or myopic.
- A. BADC
 - B. BACD
 - C. BCDA
 - D. BCAD
15. **Select the option that expresses the given sentence in indirect speech.**
He said, "Shall I ever reach my destination?"
- A. He said to me I shall never reach my destination.
 - B. He said he shall never reach his destination.
 - C. He wondered if he would ever reach his destination.
 - D. He said I shall never reach his destination
16. **Directions: Each sentence has three underlined parts labelled (a), (b), and (c). Find out whether there is an error in any underlined part and indicate your answer accordingly. If you find no error, your answer should be (d).**
- (a) Each of the boys/(b) were to blame/(c) for the accident/(d) No error.
- A. Each of the boys
 - B. were to blame
 - C. for the accident.
 - D. No error.
17. **Select the most appropriate meaning of the underlined idiom.**
Getting the long-awaited promotion is a milestone in her career.
- A. Burden
 - B. Important event

C. Wonder

D. Mishap

18. Choose the correct meaning of the underlined word in the given sentence.

The orchard was a peaceful retreat, with the sound of leaves rustling in the wind and birds chirping in the trees.

A. A piece of land with lots of houses

B. A collection of farmlands

C. A collection of apartments

D. A piece of enclosed land with fruit trees

19. Given below are four jumbled sentences. Select the option that gives their correct logical sequence.

a) The highest-ever capital outlay of Rs 2.4 lakh crore for the Railways, nine times the amount provided in 2013-14, augurs well for 'the nation's lifeline'.

b) The Vande Bharat Express, dubbed as India's 'first indigenous, semi high-speed train', is manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai.

c) The country is also scheduled to get its first hydrogen train — indigenously made in all respects — by December this year, even as over 85 per cent of India's railway network has been electrified.

d) This sector is making a robust recovery from Covid-induced disruptions, exemplified by the rollout of a series of Vande Bharat trains.

A. d, b, a, c

B. c, a, b, d

C. a, b, c, d

D. a, d, b, c

20. Select the correct spelling of the highlighted word in the following sentence.

A requisite skill for this job is computer literacy.

A. requesite

B. requisite

C. requizite

D. requisit

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

In the era of smartphones, keeping an audience's attention during a speech has become a _____(1)_____ task. Notifications and pop-ups continuously compete for eyeballs, and asking them to switch off their phones often results in _____(2)_____ or even exit from the hall. This digital distraction has made public speaking more challenging than ever.

Public speaking is fundamentally an art, requiring skill and strategy to _____(3)_____ and connect with listeners, especially when the audience is large or the subject matter is complex or needs immediate attention. The true measure of a speaker's success _____(4)_____ in whether she has managed to inform, persuade, or entertain her audience as intended. Achieving this, however, _____(5)_____ no simple feat.

21. What should come in the place of 1.

A. heartening

B. reassuring

C. enthralling

D. daunting

22. **What should come in the place of 2.**

A. engagement

B. recipient

C. disengagement

D. regent

23. **What should come in the place of 3.**

A. captivates

B. captivate

C. captivated

D. captivating

24. **What should come in the place of 4.**

A. lies

B. candor

C. veracity

D. vagrant

25. **What should come in the place of 5.**

A. was

B. are

C. were

D. is

Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]**Explanation**

1. D) Possessive pronoun
 “its” shows possession (the timing belongs to the agreement).
 A) Demonstrative pronoun – Incorrect: Demonstratives (this, that, these, those) point to something specific. “its” is not one of them.
 B) Reflexive pronoun – Incorrect: Reflexive pronouns (himself, itself, themselves) are used when subject and object are the same, which is not the case here.
 C) Personal pronoun – Incorrect: Personal pronouns are I, you, he, she, they, etc. “its” is not used here in that way.
2. B) Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have always enjoyed a special relationship.
 Compound subject “Saudi Arabia and Pakistan” is plural → verb should be plural → “have enjoyed.”
 A – Incorrect: Uses singular verb “has,” which mismatches the plural subject.
 C – Incorrect: Subject “monarchies” is plural, but the verb “has relied” is singular.
 D – Incorrect: Subject “monarchies” is plural, verb “was relying” is singular, hence wrong.
3. C) False
 The passage clearly states the agreement was signed a week after Israel bombed Qatar, not after the Hamas attack.
 A – Incorrect: It is factually wrong; the passage does not link the signing directly to the Hamas attack.
 B – Incorrect: It can be determined from the passage → timing is clearly mentioned.
 D – Incorrect: “Partially true” is incorrect, because the Hamas attack is mentioned in another context (derailing Abraham Accords), not in relation to the signing of the agreement.
4. B) It is diversifying its security alliances beyond reliance on the U.S.
 the passage says the Pakistan agreement signals that Saudi is “diversifying its security alliances” and is a message to Washington and Tel Aviv.
 A – Incorrect: the passage says the Abraham Accords process was derailed and the agreement shows a move away from that single-track alignment, not commitment to it.
 C – Incorrect: the passage mentions Qatar hosts the U.S. base; it does not state Saudi is offering territory as a U.S. base.
 D – Incorrect: the passage explicitly states it is not clear whether Pakistan’s nuclear umbrella is being offered to Saudi — there is no claim of a formal transfer.
5. A) Whether the agreement offers Pakistan’s nuclear umbrella to Saudi Arabia or guarantees an immediate Saudi response if Pakistan is attacked.
 A is correct — the passage explicitly says it is “not clear whether the agreement offers Pakistan’s nuclear umbrella to Saudi Arabia or an immediate Saudi response if Pakistan comes under attack.”
 B – Incorrect: the passage clearly states the partnership has “now been institutionalised.”

C — Incorrect: the passage directly records Pakistan training Saudi forces for decades and Saudi providing financial help.

D — Incorrect: incorrect because the passage actually warns of risks of entrapment — i.e., Pakistan could be dragged into West Asia's polycrisis, not that the agreement eliminates that risk.

6. D) ACBD

A: This sentence gives an introduction about the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on learning trends.

C: This sentence builds on the introductory idea presented in sentence A, by specifying e-learning as one of the trends that has persisted because of its benefits

B: After discussing the positive aspect of e-learning in sentence C, this sentence shifts focus to a downside related to e-learning — the decrease in attention span.

D: This sentence further elaborates on the idea presented in sentence B by quantifying the attention span

(In sort)

A and C form a logical sequence discussing the new trend of e-learning.

B and D follow as they talk about the consequence (decreased attention span) of that trend

7. D) **Squabble** (noun) – a noisy quarrel about something petty or trivial. झगड़ा/ तकरार

- **Maintain** (verb) – to keep in an existing state; to preserve or retain. बनाए रखना
- **Disagree** (verb) – to have a differing opinion. मतभेद होना
- **Agree** (verb) – to have the same opinion; to concur. सहमत होना

8. B) Jatin said that he had been at home the day before

Indirect Speech में वाक्य बदलने के लिए Reported Speech (जो Jatin ने कहा) के Tense को Reported Verb के आधार पर बदला जाता है। Direct Speech में Reported Verb "said" है, जो Past Tense में है।

Direct Speech का वाक्य है: "I was at home yesterday"। इसमें "was" (Past Tense) है और

"yesterday" एक समय-संकेतक (Time Indicator) है। Indirect Speech में Time Indicator बदलता

है: "yesterday" → "the day before" "was" (Past Tense) को Indirect Speech में Past Perfect "had been" में बदल दिया जाता है क्योंकि Reported Verb (said) Past Tense में है।

- To convert a sentence into Indirect Speech, the tense of the Reported Speech is adjusted based on the Reported Verb. In the given Direct Speech, the Reported Verb is "said," which is in the Past Tense. The Direct Speech sentence is: "I was at home yesterday" where "was" is in the Past Tense and "yesterday" is a time indicator. In Indirect Speech: The time indicator changes: "yesterday" → "the day before." The verb "was" (Past Tense) is changed to "had been" (Past Perfect) because the Reported Verb "said" is in the Past Tense.

9. B) **Mould** (verb) – form, fashion, model, shape, influence आकार देना / ढालना

Synonym: **Shape** (verb) – to give form to something (आकार देना)

- **Destroy** (verb) – to ruin completely (नष्ट करना)

- **Break** (verb) – to separate into pieces (तोड़ना)
 - **Shatter** (verb) – to break suddenly into fragments (टुकड़े-टुकड़े करना)
10. B) 'their' के बदले 'his or her' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "each one" एक Singular Subject है। Pronoun भी Singular होना चाहिए। अतः सही वाक्य होगा— where each one pursues his or her own golden bubble
- 'his or her' will be used instead of 'their' because "each one" is a Singular Subject. The pronoun must also be Singular. Therefore, the correct sentence is— where each one pursues his or her own golden bubble.
11. A) **Gift of the gab** (idiom) – Has the art of speaking बोलने की कला.
12. A) **Transcend** (verb) – rise above, surpass, exceed, go beyond, outstrip पार करना
- Synonym: Surpass** (verb) – to go beyond, excel (अधिक होना)
- **Fall** (verb) – to drop, collapse (गिरना)
 - **Sink** (verb) – to go down below surface (डूबना)
 - **Decline** (verb) – to deteriorate, weaken (क्षीण होना)
13. B) The correct spelling of 'abandone' is 'abandon' which means "give up, relinquish, drop, forgo" (त्याग देना, छोड़ देना).
14. A) 1BADC2
- B: The sentence B builds upon the idea from sentence 1 by providing additional information about Big Tech's role as an indicator (bellwether) of the broader corporate world.
- A: Sentence A introduces a change in the current scenario. While the earlier sentences spoke about Big Tech's resilience and influential nature, this sentence reveals the recent challenges faced by the industry.
- D: Sentence D provides a reason or interpretation for the actions (mass layoffs) mentioned in sentence A, describing the layoffs as a trend or "social contagion."
- C: Sentence C delves deeper into the tech industry's reaction and justification for the layoffs, linking back to the behavior mentioned in A and D.
- Sentence 2 provides a broader economic context for the actions taken by the tech industry, mentioned in the preceding sentences.
- Thus, the correct sequence is: 1BADC2.
15. C) He wondered if he would ever reach his destination
- Indirect Speech में वाक्य बदलते समय, "Shall" को "Would" में बदल दिया जाता है। प्रश्नवाचक वाक्य को Indirect Speech में बदलते समय Reporting Verb के अनुसार "wondered" या "asked" का प्रयोग किया जाता है। यहां "He said" को "He wondered" में बदला गया है, क्योंकि वाक्य एक सवाल और आत्म-संदेह को दर्शाता है
- When changing a sentence into Indirect Speech, "Shall" is transformed into "Would." For interrogative sentences, the Reporting Verb is adjusted to match the context, such as "wondered" or "asked." In this case, "He said" is appropriately changed to "He wondered," reflecting a question of doubt or self-reflection.

16. B) 'were' के बदले 'was' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'Each of' के बाद Subject Singular होता है, इसलिए Verb भी Singular होना चाहिए। जैसे— Each of the boys was to blame for the accident.
'was' will be used instead of 'were' because after 'Each of', the subject is considered singular, so the verb must also be singular. Like— Each of the boys was to blame for the accident.
17. B) **Milestone** (idiom) – Important event महत्वपूर्ण घटना
18. D) **Orchard** (noun) –A piece of enclosed land with fruit trees फलदार वृक्षों से घिरा भूमिका एक टुकड़ा
19. D) a, d, b, c
 a: This sentence is setting the context by introducing the significant investment in the Railways. Referring to the Railways as 'the nation's lifeline' indicates its importance and the subsequent positive development we can expect due to the investment.
 d: This sentence acts as a connector. It highlights a specific achievement (rollout of Vande Bharat trains) as a result of the investment and recovery from disruptions. The mention of "Vande Bharat trains" serves as a link to the next sentence which provides more details about the said trains.
 b: Building on the mention of Vande Bharat trains from sentence 'd', this sentence provides more specifics on what Vande Bharat Express is and where it's manufactured.
 c: This sentence expands on the advancements in the railway sector, illustrating that beyond the Vande Bharat trains, there are more innovations in the pipeline, such as the hydrogen train. The continuation of the theme of innovation and growth in the Railways links this sentence to the preceding ones.
20. B) The correct spelling of 'requisite' is 'requisite' which means "required or necessary for a particular purpose" – necessary, essential, required, indispensable, mandatory (आवश्यक)।
21. D) 'Daunting' का use होगा क्योंकि "daunting" का अर्थ है कठिन, चुनौतीपूर्ण या डराने वाला कार्य। Passage में कहा गया है कि smartphones के distractions के कारण audience का ध्यान speech पर बनाए रखना मुश्किल हो गया है, इसलिए 'daunting task' यहाँ बिल्कुल सही बैठता है। जबकि 'Heartening' का अर्थ है उत्साहवर्धक, 'Reassuring' का अर्थ है सांत्वना देने वाला, और 'Enthralling' का अर्थ है बहुत आकर्षक या मोहक — ये तीनों शब्द यहाँ सही अर्थ नहीं देते क्योंकि context में चुनौती (difficulty) की बात हो रही है।
- 'Daunting' will be used because it means difficult, challenging, or intimidating. The passage highlights that due to smartphone distractions, keeping the audience's attention has become a very tough job, so 'daunting task' is contextually correct. Whereas, 'Heartening' means encouraging, 'Reassuring' means comforting, and 'Enthralling' means fascinating or captivating — none of these convey the sense of difficulty expressed in the passage.
22. C) 'disengagement' का use होगा क्योंकि "disengagement" का अर्थ है अलगाव या दूरी बनाना। sentence में बताया गया है कि जब उनसे फोन बंद करने को कहा जाता है तो वे अलगाव या दूरी दिखाते हैं या hall से बाहर चले जाते हैं, इसलिए यह सही बैठता है। जबकि 'engagement' का अर्थ है जुड़ाव या

भागीदारी, 'recipient' का अर्थ है प्राप्त करने वाला व्यक्ति, और 'regent' का अर्थ है शासक, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

- 'disengagement' will be used because it means withdrawal or detachment. The sentence mentions that asking people to switch off phones often results in detachment or even leaving the hall, making 'disengagement' correct. Whereas, 'engagement' means participation, 'recipient' means a receiver, and 'regent' means a ruler, which don't fit this context.

23. B) 'captivate' का use होगा क्योंकि यहाँ verb "to" (to _____ and connect with listeners) के बाद base form (V1) की आवश्यकता है। Sentence का अर्थ है कि public speaking एक skill है जो श्रोताओं को आकर्षित करने और जोड़ने की क्षमता मांगती है, इसलिए 'captivate' सही है। जबकि 'captivates' (V5 – singular subject के साथ) गलत है क्योंकि यहाँ infinitive construction है। 'captivated' (V3 – past participle) भी गलत है क्योंकि यह passive या completed action दिखाता है। 'captivating' (V4 – present participle) adjective/continuous रूप होता है, जो infinitive pattern में फिट नहीं होता।

- 'captivate' will be used because after "to" we need the base form (V1) of the verb. The sentence means that public speaking requires the skill to attract and connect with listeners, so 'captivate' is correct. Whereas, 'captivates' is incorrect because the infinitive form doesn't allow singular present tense verb. 'Captivated' is wrong as it shows past participle/passive sense. 'Captivating' is also wrong because it is a participle/adjective form, not suitable in the infinitive construction.

24. A) 'lies' का use होगा क्योंकि "lies in" का अर्थ होता है किसी चीज़ पर निर्भर होना या उसी में निहित होना। sentence में कहा गया है कि speaker की सफलता का असली मापदंड इस बात पर निर्भर करता है कि उसने श्रोताओं को प्रभावित किया या नहीं, इसलिए 'lies' सही है। जबकि 'candor' का अर्थ है साफगोई, 'veracity' का अर्थ है सत्यता, और 'vagrant' का अर्थ है आवारा/भटकने वाला, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

- 'lies' will be used because it means "depends on / is situated in." The sentence states that the true measure of a speaker's success lies in whether she managed to inform, persuade, or entertain her audience, making 'lies' correct here. Whereas 'candor' means frankness, 'veracity' means truthfulness, and 'vagrant' means wanderer, which don't fit in this context.

25. D) 'is' का use होगा क्योंकि subject "Achieving this" singular है और उसके साथ singular verb की आवश्यकता है। sentence present tense में है और यह बताता है कि यह कार्य आसान नहीं है। जबकि 'was' past tense को दिखाता है, 'are' plural subject के लिए प्रयोग होता है और 'were' भी plural व past tense को दर्शाता है, जो यहाँ context में सही नहीं है।

- 'is' will be used because the subject "Achieving this" is singular and requires a singular verb. The sentence is in present tense and shows that this task is not simple. Whereas, 'was' indicates past tense, 'are' is used with plural subjects, and 'were' also indicates plural and past tense, which don't fit in this context.