Right to dignity: On ASHA and anganwadi workers' protests

Governments must ensure **equitable** pay for ASHA workers

The ongoing **protests** by ASHA and anganwadi workers in West Bengal demanding their wages be increased to ₹15,000 a month **is** a **sour** reminder of efforts to deny them permanent employee status despite their **centrality** to many national and State welfare schemes. The Indira Gandhi government denied the first of many of these workers 'worker' status under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), **laying** a foundation that India has continued to build on to **bypass** labour laws. As the workload increased, the formation of a national union followed in 1989, but even in the **liberalisation era**, the state created the category of 'scheme workers' and expanded social schemes but not permanent government jobs. The State of Karnataka vs Ameerbi (1996) — **tribunal** decision — further excluded anganwadi workers from the set of government employees even as the top court expanded the right to food, and thus the need for these workers, in 2004. The ASHA programme **took root** in the mid-2000s and followed a similar **trajectory**, with the government framing them as '**activists**'. Worse, in the 2010s, when the government, employers, and workers' unions recommended job **regularisation**, minimum wages, and pension and **gratuity** for ASHA workers at the 45th Labour Conference, **successive** UPA and NDA governments chose not to implement this. In 2015, the NDA government **slashed** the ICDS budget, and these workers have been protesting since at regular intervals just to **make ends meet**.

The Centre also **froze** its contribution to these workers' pay in 2018, **in effect** leaving ASHA and anganwadi personnel to absorb **fiscal** shocks. Together with the lack of a guarantee of better working conditions for **gig workers** in the new labour **codes**, the state has effectively **exited** the social contract for many of its most **vulnerable** labourers **in favour of** promoting business **metrics** and more fiscal **headroom** at the Centre. States do **wield** more power in hiring and dispute resolution and are also more **vulnerable** to electoral pressure, which unions have **taken advantage of**, but there is also **considerable disparity** between States. As central **honoraria stagnated**, States were **compelled** to top up payments from their own budgets. **Predictably**, wealthier States and those facing **sustained** Union pressure have been able to offer more or additional benefits than fiscally **constrained** ones. **Nonetheless**, it is **unconscionable** that the practice of denying these workers their due still continues to be knowingly **exploitative**. The Centre must legally reclassify these 'volunteers' as statutory employees under the Code on Social Security, guaranteeing minimum wages and pension coverage. The Centre and States must also **bridge** fiscal **gaps** to ensure **equitable** pay across regions. Only by **institutionalising** these protections can India **grant** these **essential** workers their rightful dignity.

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

Vocabulary

1. **Dignity** (noun) – self–respect, pride, stature, nobility, worthiness गरिमा

2. **Equitable** (adjective) – fair, just, impartial, unbiased, even–handed न्यायसंगत

3. **Sour** (adjective) – unpleasant, bitter, disagreeable, nasty, resentful कटु/अरुचिकर

4. **Centrality** (noun) – core, essence, pivot, focus, salience प्रमुखता

5. **Lay the foundation** (verb) – to produce the basic ideas or structures from which something much larger develops नींव रखना

6. **Bypass** (verb) – circumvent, avoid, evade, sidestep, dodge दरकिनार करना

7. **Liberalisation** (noun) – deregulation, relaxation, opening, broadening, loosening उदारीकरण

8. **Era** (noun) – epoch, period, age, time, generation युग

9. **Tribunal** (noun) – court, board, panel, committee, forum अधिकरण

10. **Took root** (phrase) – to become fixed or established established or started to grow मजबूती से स्थापित होना

11. **Trajectory** (noun) – path, course, track, route, direction प्रक्षेपवक्र/मार्ग

12. **Activists** (noun) – campaigner, advocate, champion, reformer, militant कार्यकर्ता

13. **Regularisation** (noun) – formalisation, standardisation, adjustment, legitimisation, systematisation नियमितीकरण

14. **Gratuity** (noun) – tip, bonus, perk, reward, gift उपहार/अनुग्रह राशि

15. **Successive** (adjective) – consecutive, sequential, following, ensuing, continuous क्रमिक

16. **Slash** (verb) – cut, reduce, drop, lower, decrease भारी कटौती करना

17. **Make ends meet** (phrase) – to have just enough money to pay for the things that you need गुजारा करना

18. **Freeze** (verb) – fix, halt, suspend, stop, hold स्थिर करना

19. **In effect** (phrase) – used to convey that something is true in practice though not formally acknowledged वास्तव में

20. **Fiscal** (adjective) – financial, monetary, economic, budgetary, pecuniary राजकोषीय

21. **Gig workers** (noun) – independent contractors, freelancers, temporary workers, on–call workers, platform workers अस्थायी कर्मचारी

22. **Codes** (noun) – laws, rules, regulations, statutes, guidelines संहिता

23. **Exit** (verb) – leave, depart, quit, withdraw, retire बाहर निकलना

24. **Vulnerable** (adjective) – helpless, weak, defenceless, exposed, at–risk असुरक्षित

25. **In favour of** (phrase) – to support or prefer something/someone के पक्ष में

26. **Metrics** (noun) – measures, standards, parameters, benchmarks, indicators मापदंड

27. **Headroom** (noun) – margin, scope, leeway, space, latitude गुंजाइश

28. **Wield** (verb) – exercise, exert, hold, possess, employ उपयोग करना

29. **Taken advantage of** (phrase) – to make use of something in a way that is beneficial for oneself फायदा उठाना

30. **Considerable** (adjective) – significant, substantial, sizable, ample, great काफी/बड़ा

31. **Disparity** (noun) – inequality, discrepancy, imbalance, gap, difference असमानता

32. **Honoraria** (noun) – payment, fee, reward, compensation, remuneration मानदेय

33. **Stagnate** (verb) – languish, stall, decline, idle, cease स्थिर होना

34. **Compel** (verb) – force, oblige, coerce, pressure, constrain मजबूर करना

35. **Predictably** (adverb) – expectedly, foreseeably, reliably, normally, typically जैसा कि अनुमान था

36. **Sustained** (adjective) – continuous, constant, steady, prolonged, persistent निरंतर

37. **Constrained** (adjective) – restricted, limited, confined, cramped, inhibited विवश/सीमित

38. **Nonetheless** (adverb) – nevertheless, however, still, yet, even so फिर भी

39. **Unconscionable** (adjective) – unethical, immoral, excessive, outrageous, unscrupulous अनैतिक/बेशर्मी भरा

40. **Exploitative** (adjective) – unfair, abusive, manipulative, opportunistic, greedy शोषणकारी

41. **Bridge the gap** (phrase) – to make two groups, people, ideas, etc. less separate or less different. अंतर कम करना

42. **Institutionalise** (verb) – formalising, establishing, standardising, organising, systematising संस्थागत करना

43. **Grant** (verb) – give, award, accord, bestow, provide प्रदान करना

44. **Essential** (adjective) – crucial, vital, fundamental, key, indispensable अनिवार्य

Summary of the Editorial

1. ASHA and anganwadi workers in West Bengal are protesting for a monthly wage of ₹15,000.

2. Their protests highlight the long-standing denial of permanent employee status despite their crucial role in welfare schemes.

3. The roots of this problem go back to the Indira Gandhi era, when anganwadi workers were denied formal "worker" status under ICDS.

4. This decision enabled governments to bypass labour laws while expanding welfare programmes.

5. As workloads increased, anganwadi workers formed a national union in 1989 to press for rights.

6. Even during liberalisation, the state expanded social schemes but avoided creating permanent government jobs.

7. The 1996 Karnataka vs Ameerbi decision excluded anganwadi workers from being recognised as government employees.

8. At the same time, the Supreme Court expanded the right to food, increasing reliance on these workers.

9. The ASHA programme launched in the mid-2000s followed a similar pattern, branding workers as "activists" rather than employees.

10. In the 2010s, consensus emerged at the 45th Labour Conference on regularisation, minimum wages, and social security for ASHA workers.

11. Both UPA and NDA governments failed to implement these recommendations.

12. The NDA government cut the ICDS budget in 2015, worsening workers' economic conditions.

13. The Centre froze its contribution to workers' pay in 2018, forcing them to absorb fiscal shocks.

14. Pay disparities across States widened, as wealthier States could top up wages while poorer ones struggled.

15. The editorial argues that the Centre must reclassify these workers as statutory employees, ensure minimum wages and pensions, and guarantee equitable pay to uphold their dignity.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What is the main theme of the passage?**   **[Editorial Page]**
   A. Success of fiscal reforms
   B. Growth of social schemes
   C. Exploitation of welfare workers
   D. Improvement in labour rights

2. **Identify the sentence with correct subject-verb agreement:**
   A. The ongoing protests by workers is demanding higher wages
   B. The ongoing protests by workers are demanding higher wages
   C. The ongoing protests by workers was demanding higher wages
   D. The ongoing protests by workers has demanding higher wages

3. **From the passage, what can be inferred about the government's long-term approach toward ASHA and anganwadi workers?**
   A. Prioritized business metrics consistently
   B. Strengthened labour rights consistently
   C. Expanded permanent jobs consistently
   D. Reduced fiscal pressures consistently

4. **Fill the blank with the most appropriate word based on context:**
   By refusing to regularize these workers despite depending on them, the State's actions were both economically strategic and morally _____.
   A. justified through prevailing norms
   B. consistent with workers' dignity
   C. applauded across political circles
   D. indefensible beyond reasonable measure

5. **What type of pronoun is the word "them" in the sentence:**
   "…efforts to deny them permanent employee status…"
   A. Demonstrative objective pronoun
   B. Personal objective pronoun
   C. Relative objective pronoun
   D. Reflexive objective pronoun

6. **Which of the following words is the closest synonym to unconscionable as used in the passage?**
   A. Permissible
   B. Palatable
   C. Reprehensible
   D. Ordinary

7. **Select the most appropriate MEANING of the idiom "Bridge the gap."**
   A. Aggravate ideological schisms
   B. Ameliorate disparities
   C. Evade structural constraints
   D. Dilute substantive concerns

8. **Select the option that gives the most appropriate meaning of the underlined word.**
   The patient **absconded** from the hospital at dawn.
   A. Faced lack of cooperation from the nurse

B. Collected acknowledgement of the payment

C. Learned to communicate with others

D. Fled away hurriedly and secretly

9. **Select the most appropriate antonym of the word "Reins."**

A. Control

B. Submission

C. Power

D. Command

10. **Find the incorrect part of the sentence:**

Neither Ram nor his brothers is reliable.

A. is reliable.

B. Neither Ram

C. nor his brothers

D. No error

11. **Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the word "Ignorant."**

A. Intelligent

B. Silent

C. Faithful

D. Honest

12. **Identify the correctly spelled word.**

A. Denudeation

B. Deforastation

C. Deforestation

D. Deforistation

13. **Convert the sentence provided below from its passive voice structure to an active voice structure:**

The claim that the system has been tampered with was dismissed as baseless

A. The system tampered the claim, which was dismissed.

B. The dismissal of the system tampering was claimed.

C. It was dismissed as baseless that the system was tampered with.

D. Authorities dismissed the claim that someone had tampered with the system.

14. **Select the most appropriate SYNONYM of the word "Plummet."**

A. Ascend

B. Stabilise

C. Nosedive

D. Linger

15. **Fill in the blank:**

Had I known the conference was postponed, I _____ my flight reservations.

A. would cancel

B. would have canceled

C. will have canceled

D. had canceled

16. **Sentences of a paragraph are given below in jumbled order. Select the option that arranges the sentences in the correct order to form a meaningful and coherent paragraph.**

A.   Satcom and terrestrial networks are complementary, and come together to provide universal telecom coverage.
B.   Apart from bridging India's digital divide, satcom has specific roles to play strategically and in climate and disaster management.
C.   Satellite communications services are about to be launched in India with major global players - Starlink, Eutelsat, SES and Kuiper - in various stages of preparations.
D.   There is urgency among service providers that have made big investments in launching their satellite constellations to secure a piece of the India action where a large chunk of consumers isn't served by terrestrial networks.
A. C, D, A, B
B. A, D, B, C
C. B, D, C, A
D. A, B, C, D

17. **Choose the most suitable option to replace the highlighted part of the sentence:**
He speaks as if he was knowing everything.
A. As if he knows everything
B. As though he knew everything
C. As if he knew everthing
D. As he knows everything

18. **Select the correct option:**
The treaty stipulates that disputes shall be resolved ___ arbitration.
A. through
B. by
C. with
D. via

19. **Find the incorrect part of the sentence:**
The thief was hung for his crimes.
A. was hung
B. The thief
C. for his crimes.
D. No error

20. **Select the most appropriate SYNONYM of the word "Massacre."**
A. Preservation
B. Carnage
C. Consolation
D. Mediation

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.
You'd think natural calamities like floods won't leave death and destruction in their wake in the First World. Well, as the _____(1)_____floods that have devastated Texas, killing more than 100 and leaving dozens, including children, missing, climate-induced natural disasters are a great_____(2)_____. More used to such tragedies occurring in our part of the world, the flash floods and landslides claiming almost 80 lives, with dozens missing, in Himachal Pradesh

have been no less_____ (3) _____. But the two disaster zones separated by thousands of miles have the same problems: geography, 'unnatural' rainfall, and unhelpful human intervention and lack of_____ (4) _____. And, yet, many governments like the US are deprioritising climate change, heralding what the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change calls the 'Apathy Era'. The Trump regime has _____ (5) _____reduced funding for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and wants to 'eliminate' the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema).

21. **What should come in the place of 1.**
    A. consent
    B. flash
    C. remit
    D. discretion
22. **What should come in the place of 2.**
    A. elitist
    B. verdict
    C. leveller
    D. chasm
23. **What should come in the place of 3.**
    A. euphoric
    B. mysterious
    C. elite
    D. tragic
24. **What should come in the place of 4.**
    A. preparedness
    B. negligence
    C. dissemination
    D. competence
25. **What should come in the place of 5.**
    A. gradually
    B. certainly
    C. virtually
    D. drastically

Answers

1. C	2.B	3.A	4. D	5. B	6.C	7. B	8. D	9. B	10. A	11.A	12.C

13. D	14.C	15.B	16.A	17.C	18.A	19.A	20.B	21.B	22.C	23.D	24.A

25. D   [Editorial Page]

Explanations

1. C) **Exploitation of welfare workers**
   The central theme is how ASHA and anganwadi workers have been systematically denied employee status, fair wages, and social security despite being essential to welfare schemes—illustrating state-enabled exploitation.
   A. Success of fiscal reforms — incorrect because fiscal actions are shown to harm workers, not succeed.
   B. Growth of social schemes — incorrect because although schemes are mentioned, the focus is on exploitation, not expansion.
   D. Improvement in labour rights — incorrect because the passage argues the opposite: labour rights have been withheld.

2. B) **The ongoing protests by workers are demanding higher wages**
   The plural subject "protests" requires a plural verb "are demanding."
   A. is demanding → Uses singular verb with plural subject (incorrect).
   C. was demanding → Wrong number (singular) and mismatched tense (past).
   D. has demanding → Grammatically incomplete; requires "has been demanding."

3. A) **Prioritized business metrics consistently**
   The passage indicates that successive governments avoided job regularization, cut budgets, froze contributions, and emphasized business metrics and fiscal headroom over labour rights — implying a prioritization of business/fiscal concerns over workers' protections.
   B is incorrect because the passage highlights denial of permanent status, stagnation of honoraria, and non-implementation of labour protections.
   C is incorrect because governments expanded social schemes but not permanent government jobs.
   D is incorrect because it notes slashed budgets and shifted fiscal shocks to workers, not broadly reduced pressures.

4. D) **indefensible beyond reasonable measure**
   The passage calls the treatment of these workers exploitative and states that denial of due benefits is unconscionable, aligning with a meaning close to morally indefensible.
   A falsely implies acceptable justification whereas the passage indicates moral unacceptability.
   B contradicts the passage since the actions violated workers' dignity rather than upheld it.
   C is incorrect because the protests and criticism show the actions were not widely applauded.

5. B) **Personal objective pronoun**
   The word "them" functions as a personal pronoun in the objective case, receiving the action of the verb "deny."
   A. Demonstrative objective pronoun → Demonstratives are words like this/that/these/those, not "them."
   C. Relative objective pronoun → Relatives introduce clauses (who/which/that), not "them."
   D. Reflexive objective pronoun → Reflexives end in "-self/-selves," e.g., "themselves," not "them."

6. C) **Reprehensible**

   In the passage, unconscionable describes something morally unacceptable and shocking. Reprehensible means morally blameworthy and deserving strong criticism — closest in meaning.

   A. Permissible: means allowed or acceptable; not morally shocking.

   B. Palatable: means acceptable or pleasing; opposite direction.

   D. Ordinary: means usual or normal; unrelated to moral outrage.

7. B) **Bridge the gap** (idiom) – To lessen, narrow, or remove differences between two groups, ideas, or positions.

   अंतर कम करना

   - **Ameliorate disparities** – To reduce inequalities or differences and bring positions closer. असमानताओं को कम करना

8. D) **Abscond** (verb) – Fled away hurriedly and secretly. भाग जाना

9. B) **Reins** (noun) – The power to direct or control; leadership or authority. बागडोर / नियंत्रण

   Antonym: **Submission** (noun) – The action of accepting or yielding to a superior force or authority. आत्मसमर्पण / अधीनता

   - **Control** – The power to influence or direct. नियंत्रण
   - **Power** – The ability to do or act. शक्ति
   - **Command** – Authority to control. आदेश / नियंत्रण

10. A) 'is' के बदले **'are'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'neither…nor' में verb हमेशा nearest subject के अनुसार आती है, और यहाँ 'brothers' plural है; जैसे— Neither the teacher nor the students are present.

    • **'are'** will be used instead of 'is' because under the proximity rule the verb agrees with the nearest subject, which is plural; like— Neither he nor his friends are coming.

11. A) **Intelligent**

    Ignorant (adjective) – Lacking knowledge or awareness; uneducated. अज्ञानी / अनजान

    Antonym: **Intelligent** – Having or showing high mental ability and understanding. बुद्धिमान / ज्ञानी

    - **Silent** – Not speaking. मौन
    - **Faithful** – Loyal. वफादार
    - **Honest** – Truthful. ईमानदार

12. C) **Deforestation** – Correct spelling; means clearing of forests. वनों की कटाई

13. D) **Authorities dismissed the claim that someone had tampered with the system**.

    Passive से Active Voice में बदलने के लिए, Passive वाक्य का Subject (The claim that the system has been tampered with) Active वाक्य का Object बन जाता है। Passive verb "was dismissed" को Active में "dismissed" किया जाता है और जो कार्य कर रहा है, उसे Subject के रूप में जोड़ा जाता है।

    यहाँ Passive वाक्य में "was dismissed" (Past Simple Passive) प्रयोग हुआ है, इसलिए Active में Past Simple Active का प्रयोग होगा।

"Authorities" को कर्ता (Subject) के रूप में जोड़ा गया है, जिससे वाक्य स्पष्ट और व्याकरणिक रूप से सही हो जाता है।

To change from Passive to Active Voice, the subject of the passive sentence becomes the object of the active sentence. The passive verb "was dismissed" (Past Simple Passive) is changed into "dismissed" (Past Simple Active), and an appropriate subject performing the action is introduced.

Here, "Authorities" functions as the subject, "dismissed" as the verb, and "the claim that someone had tampered with the system" as the object, making option D the correct active voice transformation.

14. C) **Plummet** (verb) – To fall or drop suddenly and sharply; to plunge steeply. तेज़ी से गिरना
Synonym: **Nosedive** (verb) – To fall rapidly and steeply, often suddenly. अचानक तेज़ी से गिरना

- **Ascend** (verb) – To move upward. ऊपर उठना
- **Stabilise** (verb) – To make or become steady. स्थिर होना
- **Linger** (verb) – To stay longer than necessary. ठहरना

15. B) **would have canceled**

• 'would have canceled' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि यह Third Conditional sentence है। Structure होता है:

Had + subject + past participle, subject + would have + past participle।
यहाँ बात past unreal condition की हो रही है—अगर मुझे पहले पता होता (लेकिन पता नहीं था), तो मैं reservation cancel कर देता (लेकिन नहीं किया)। इसलिए would have canceled सही है।

- 'would have canceled' should be used because the sentence expresses a hypothetical situation in the past. In third conditional sentences, the correct form in the main clause is would have + past participle. Hence, this option fits both grammar and meaning accurately.

16. A) **C, D, A, B**
C starts by introducing the subject "Satellite communications services" and the fact that they are about to be launched in India with global players. This sets the context.
D follows C because it uses the noun "service providers" (which are the global players mentioned in C) and explains their urgency due to the unserved consumers. The phrase "where a large chunk of consumers isn't served by terrestrial networks" in D leads to the next idea.
A follows D by directly addressing the complementary nature of satcom and terrestrial networks to provide universal coverage. This solves the problem mentioned in D (unserved consumers).
In Hindi:

- C sentence की शुरुआत करता है क्योंकि यह subject "Satellite communications services" को introduce करता है और बताता है कि वे India में launch होने वाली हैं with global players। यह context set करता है।

- D, C के बाद आता है क्योंकि यह "service providers" (जिनका C में mention है) की urgency को describe करता है और बताता है कि वे India के market में invest कर रहे हैं क्योंकि बहुत सारे consumers terrestrial networks द्वारा serve नहीं हैं।

- A, D के बाद logically fit होता है क्योंकि यह बताता है कि satcom और terrestrial networks complementary हैं और मिलकर universal coverage provide करते हैं। यह D में mentioned problem (unserved consumers) का solution बताता है।

- B, A के बाद आता है क्योंकि यह satcom के additional roles (strategic, climate, disaster management) को expand करता है, जो paragraph को conclude करता है।

17. C) 'was knowing' के बदले **'knew'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "as if / as though" के बाद unreal or imaginary present situation को दिखाने के लिए Past Simple (Subjunctive mood) का प्रयोग किया जाता है। इसलिए सही संरचना होगी — as if he knew everything।
'knew' will be used instead of 'was knowing' because after "as if / as though", when an unreal or imaginary situation in the present is expressed, Past Simple (Subjunctive mood) is used; like — He talks as if he knew everything.

18. A) **through**" एक preposition है। इसका प्रयोग किस प्रक्रिया या माध्यम से कोई काम पूरा हुआ — यह बताने के लिए किया जाता है। Legal और academic contexts में "resolved through arbitration" बिल्कुल acceptable और commonly used construction है, जहाँ arbitration को पूरी resolution प्रक्रिया माना जाता है, न कि केवल एक साधन
Other Options Analysis:
      with — does not show method.
      via — informal/technical; not preferred in legal contexts.
Correct Sentence: The treaty stipulates that disputes shall be resolved through arbitration.

19. A) 'hung' के बदले **'hanged'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि फाँसी देने के संदर्भ में verb का सही रूप hanged होता है; जैसे— He was hanged for murder.
• 'hanged' will be used instead of 'hung' because for execution, the correct verb form is hanged, not hung; Like— He was hanged for murder.

20. B) **Massacre** (noun) – The brutal and indiscriminate killing of a large number of people; slaughter, bloodbath. नरसंहार
Synonym: **Carnage** (noun) – The killing of a large number of people; widespread slaughter. हत्या-तांडव

• **Preservation** (noun) – The act of protecting or maintaining something. संरक्षण
• **Consolation** (noun) – Comfort received after disappointment or loss. सांत्वना
• **Mediation** (noun) – Intervention to resolve a dispute. मध्यस्थता

21. B) **'Flash'** का use होगा क्योंकि "flash floods" का अर्थ होता है अचानक और तीव्र बाढ़ आना। Passage में Texas की बाढ़ को अचानक आई हुई और विनाशकारी बताया गया है, इसलिए 'flash' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'Consent' का अर्थ है सहमति, 'Remit' का अर्थ है कार्यक्षेत्र/भुगतान भेजना, और 'Discretion' का अर्थ है विवेक या निर्णय की स्वतंत्रता, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।
'Flash' will be used because it refers to something sudden and violent, and the correct collocation is "flash floods." The passage clearly talks about sudden floods devastating Texas, so it fits contextually and grammatically. Whereas, 'Consent' means agreement, 'Remit' means

responsibility/payment, and 'Discretion' means choice or judgment, which don't fit in this context.

22. C) **'Leveller'** का use होगा क्योंकि "leveller" का अर्थ है ऐसा कुछ जो सबको बराबर कर देता है, यानी जो अमीर-गरीब, विकसित–विकासशील देशों के बीच फर्क मिटा देता है। Passage में बताया गया है कि climate-induced natural disasters सब जगह समान रूप से असर डालते हैं, चाहे First World (जैसे अमेरिका) हो या हमारा देश। इसलिए 'leveller' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'Elitist' का अर्थ है विशिष्ट वर्ग समर्थक, 'Verdict' का अर्थ है न्यायालय का निर्णय, और 'Chasm' का अर्थ है गहरी खाई या विभाजन, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

   - 'Leveller' will be used because it means something that equalizes or reduces differences. The passage emphasizes that natural disasters affect both developed countries like the US and developing regions like Himachal Pradesh equally, hence making disasters a "great leveller." Whereas, 'Elitist' means supporting an elite group, 'Verdict' means a legal judgment, and 'Chasm' means a deep division or gap, which don't fit in this context.

23. D) **'Tragic'** का use होगा क्योंकि "tragic" का अर्थ है अत्यंत दुखद या विनाशकारी। Sentence में कहा गया है कि Himachal Pradesh में आई बाढ़ और भूस्खलन भी कम दुखद नहीं रहे। इसलिए 'tragic' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'Euphoric' का अर्थ है अत्यधिक खुशी, 'Mysterious' का अर्थ है रहस्यमय, और 'Elite' का अर्थ है उच्च वर्गीय, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।

   - 'Tragic' will be used because it means extremely sad or disastrous. The sentence emphasizes that floods and landslides in Himachal Pradesh have been no less tragic, making this the correct contextual and grammatical choice. Whereas, 'Euphoric' means extremely happy, 'Mysterious' means puzzling or secretive, and 'Elite' refers to a privileged group, none of which fit the sense of devastation here.
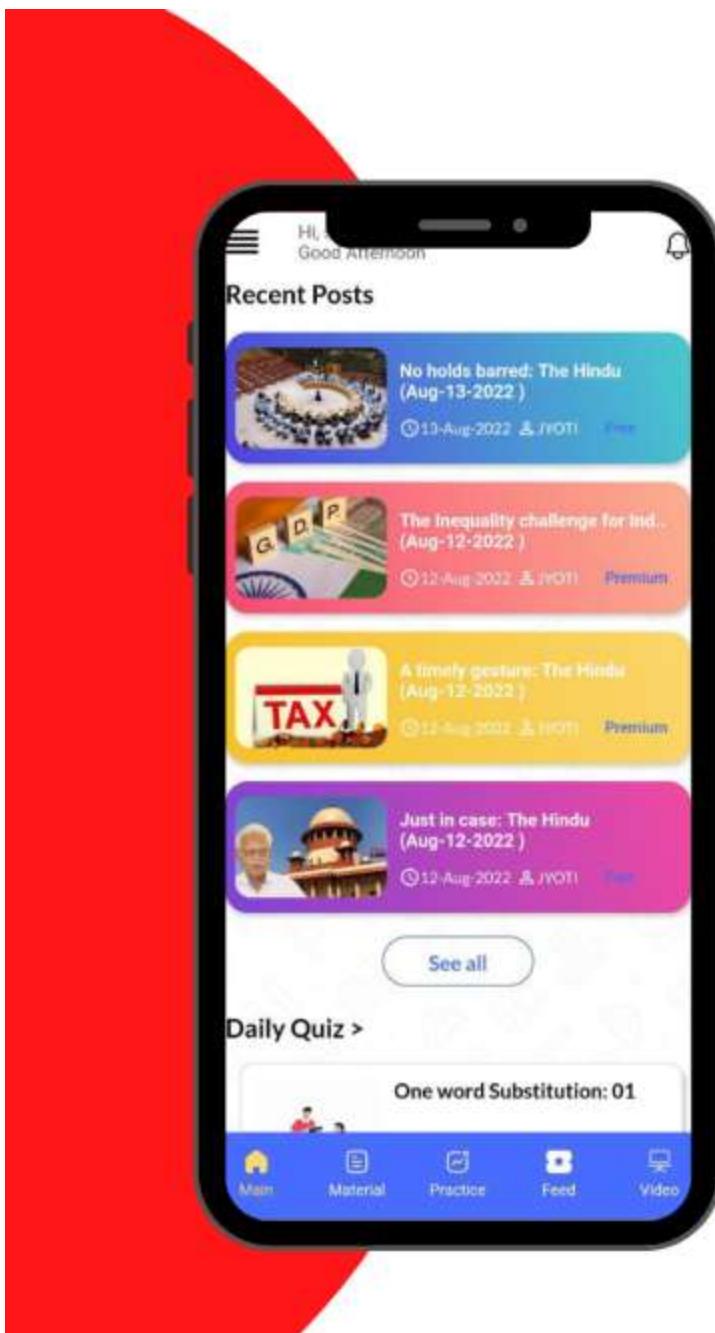
24. A) **'Preparedness'** का use होगा क्योंकि "preparedness" का अर्थ है किसी स्थिति के लिए पहले से तैयार रहना। Passage में कहा गया है कि दोनों जगहों (Texas और Himachal) में आपदाओं की समान समस्या है और साथ ही lack of preparedness (तैयारी की कमी) भी है। इसलिए 'preparedness' यहाँ सही है। जबकि 'Negligence' का अर्थ है लापरवाही (यह 'lack of' के साथ सही grammatical collocation नहीं बनाता), 'Dissemination' का अर्थ है जानकारी या विचार फैलाना, और 'Competence' का अर्थ है दक्षता, जो disaster management की context में उतना उपयुक्त नहीं है।

   - 'Preparedness' will be used because it means readiness to deal with a situation in advance. The sentence highlights that both regions suffer from geography, unnatural rainfall, and lack of preparedness in disaster management, so this is grammatically and contextually correct. Whereas, 'Negligence' means carelessness (doesn't collocate properly with "lack of"), 'Dissemination' means spreading information, and 'Competence' means ability or skill, which do not fit the idea of being ready for disasters.

25. D) **'Drastically'** का use होगा क्योंकि "drastically" का अर्थ है बहुत ही गंभीर, तीव्र या बड़े स्तर पर। Passage में कहा गया है कि Trump regime ने NOAA की funding को बहुत हद तक कम

कर दिया है। इसलिए 'drastically reduced funding' सही phrase है। जबकि 'Gradually' का अर्थ है धीरे-धीरे, 'Certainly' का अर्थ है निश्चित रूप से, और 'Virtually' का अर्थ है लगभग, जो यहाँ सही नहीं हैं।

- 'Drastically' will be used because it means severely or significantly. The sentence stresses that the Trump regime drastically reduced funding for NOAA, showing a strong and impactful reduction. Whereas, 'Gradually' means slowly, 'Certainly' means surely, and 'Virtually' means almost — none of which match the intensity of reduction intended here.