

India is no longer the fourth-largest economy in the world.

According to the IMF's latest World Economic **Outlook**, India has **slipped** to sixth place in the world GDP rankings, with Japan and the UK overtaking it **in terms of** nominal GDP in current US dollars. For 2026, the IMF has **estimated** the Indian economy at \$4.15 trillion, up from \$3.92 trillion the year before. In comparison, **the size** of the UK's economy **has** been **pegged at** \$4.27 trillion and that of Japan at \$4.38 trillion, **marginally edging out** India.

There are two main reasons why India has **slid** on these rankings. The first is a change in how GDP is estimated. Under the new **methodology** (with base year 2022-23), the government has made **a whole host of methodological** changes and **incorporated** newer data sources. The new GDP **estimates** released in February-end **provide** a more accurate picture of the economy. However, this update also found that the **outgoing** series was **overestimating** India's GDP by around three to four per cent — in 2025-26, India's GDP was **reassessed** from being Rs 357 trillion to Rs 345 trillion. The second reason is the exchange rate. Since the IMF compares **economies** in US dollar terms, **the exchange rate** of any domestic currency **vis-à-vis** the US dollar **becomes** a crucial factor. Over the past year, the Indian rupee has **weakened** by almost 10 per cent against the US dollar — first due to the **imposition** of US tariffs, and later, to the uncertainty around a trade deal. What made this weakness even worse is the fact that it has happened during a period when the US dollar itself has actually weakened against most other major currencies. The net effect has been that when calculated in dollar terms, India's **GDP**, already **pegged down** in rupee terms, **falls** behind that of Japan and the UK.

Notwithstanding the **slide**, the IMF **projects** that India will **overtake** the UK and Japan in 2027 and then become the third-largest economy by overtaking Germany in 2031. That should not, however, draw away from the need to push forward **aggressively** on the domestic reform agenda, especially in the more politically **contentious** areas such as electricity and fertilisers. **Considering** the series of shocks that the Indian and the global economy have recently been **subjected to** — from the Covid pandemic to the wars in Ukraine and Iran — it would be **prudent** for policymakers to **factor such risks into** their strategies.

[Practice Exercise]

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

Vocabulary

1. **Outlook** (noun) - prospect, future, forecast, expectation, vista दृष्टिकोण
2. **Slip** (verb) - decline, fall, drop, slump, plummet गिरना/खिसकना
3. **In terms of** (phrase) regarding/concerning something के संदर्भ में
4. **Estimate** (verb) - calculate, appraise, assess, evaluate, gauge अनुमान लगाना
5. **Peg** (at) (verb) - to fix or pin a value at a certain level मूल्य निर्धारित करना
6. **Marginally** (adverb) - slightly, barely, somewhat, minutely, insignificantly थोड़ा सा
7. **Edge out** (phrasal verb) - to defeat or surpass someone by a small margin पछाड़ देना
8. **Slide** (verb) - descend, slip, tumble, decline, fall गिरना/नीचे आना
9. **Methodology** (noun) - procedure, system, technique, approach, strategy कार्यप्रणाली
10. **A whole host of** (phrase) a large number or collection of people or things बड़ी संख्या में
11. **Methodological** (adjective) - procedural, systematic, technical, analytic, logical प्रक्रियात्मक
12. **Incorporate** (verb) - include, integrate, embody, assimilate, absorb शामिल करना
13. **Estimate** (noun) - approximation, calculation, projection, valuation, appraisal आकलन
14. **Outgoing** (adjective) - departing, previous, former, past, retiring निवर्तमान/पिछला
15. **Overestimate** (verb) - overvalue, overrate, exaggerate, overstate, magnify अधिक आकलन करना
16. **Reassess** (verb) - re-evaluate, review, reconsider, reappraise, amend पुनर्मूल्यांकन करना
17. **Economy** (noun) - wealth, resources, financial system, state, sector अर्थव्यवस्था
18. **Vis-à-vis** (preposition) - regarding, concerning, towards के मुकाबले/के संबंध में
19. **Weaken** (verb) - enfeeble, debilitate, undermine, dilute, sap कमजोर होना
20. **Imposition** (noun) - infliction, enforcement, levy, application, intrusion लागू करना/थोपना
21. **Peg down** (phrasal verb) - to keep something at a lower level or limit कम स्तर पर टिका होना
22. **Notwithstanding** (preposition) - despite, regardless of, albeit के बावजूद
23. **Slide** (noun) - downfall, drop, reduction, lessening, ebb गिरावट
24. **Project** (verb) - predict, forecast, visualize, anticipate, estimate पूर्वानुमान लगाना
25. **Overtake** (verb) - surpass, outdistance, outstrip, eclipse, beat आगे निकल जाना
26. **Overtaking** (noun) - bypassing, outdoing, transcending, outshining, topping आगे निकलना

27. **Aggressively** (adverb) - vigorously, forcefully, boldly, strenuously, intensely
आक्रामक रूप से
28. **Contentious** (adjective) - controversial, disputable, debatable, ambivalent, polemical
विवादास्पद
29. **Considering** (preposition) - regarding, given, noting
देखते हुए/विचार करते हुए
30. **Subject to** (phrase) - likely to be affected by or dependent on something के अधीन/प्रभावित होना
31. **Prudent** (adjective) - wise, cautious, sagacious, judicious, discreet
विवेकपूर्ण
32. **Factor into** (phrasal verb) - to include something as a relevant part of a calculation
शामिल करना

Summary of the Editorial

1. India is **no longer the fourth-largest economy** in the world.
2. According to the International Monetary Fund, India has slipped to **sixth place in GDP rankings**.
3. Japan and the United Kingdom have overtaken India in **nominal GDP terms**.
4. India's GDP for 2026 is estimated at **\$4.15 trillion**, up from \$3.92 trillion.
5. Japan's GDP is estimated at **\$4.38 trillion**, and the UK's at **\$4.27 trillion**.
6. One reason for India's decline is a **change in GDP calculation methodology**.
7. The new GDP series (base year 2022–23) provides a **more accurate economic picture**.
8. Earlier estimates had **overstated India's GDP by 3–4%**.
9. India's GDP for 2025–26 was revised downward from **₹357 trillion to ₹345 trillion**.
10. The second reason is the **depreciation of the Indian rupee**.
11. The rupee weakened by about **10% against the US dollar** over the past year.
12. This decline was influenced by **US tariffs and trade uncertainties**.
13. The impact worsened because the **US dollar weakened globally**, yet the rupee fell further.
14. Despite the setback, the IMF projects India will **regain higher ranking by 2027** and become the **third-largest economy by 2031**.
15. India must continue **domestic economic reforms** and remain cautious of global risks like pandemics and wars.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **Which of the following statements accurately reflects India's GDP ranking status according to the IMF's latest outlook?** [Editorial page]
 - A. India is currently the third-largest global economy having surpassed Germany in 2026.
 - B. Japan and the UK have overtaken India in nominal GDP rankings as of early 2026.
 - C. India's GDP is projected to fall behind that of Germany by the year 2027.
 - D. India's economy is estimated at \$4.38 trillion which is equal to the UK's economy.
2. **Which of the following statements regarding the reasons for India's slide in GDP rankings is INCORRECT?**
 - A. The new methodology incorporates newer data sources to provide a more accurate picture.
 - B. The outgoing GDP series was overestimating India's actual GDP by about three to four percent.
 - C. The Indian rupee has weakened significantly against the US dollar over the past year.
 - D. The US dollar weakened against the Indian rupee due to the imposition of US tariffs.
3. **Which of the following best describes the tone of the author regarding India's future economic projections?**
 - A. Anxious and overly critical of the IMF's flawed statistical methodologies.
 - B. Realistic and cautionary, balancing future potential with necessary reforms.
 - C. Dismissive of the impact of global shocks like the pandemic and wars.
 - D. Jubilant and celebratory about India becoming the third-largest economy.
4. **What is the primary reason the author emphasizes the need for domestic reforms in electricity and fertilizers?**
 - A. These reforms are necessary to address politically contentious areas hindering progress.
 - B. These sectors are currently the largest contributors to the \$4.15 trillion GDP estimate.
 - C. The IMF has explicitly mandated these specific reforms as a condition for the 2031 forecast.
 - D. These sectors are responsible for the 10 percent weakening of the Indian rupee.
5. **What can be inferred about the impact of the new GDP methodology on the assessment of India's economy?**
 - A. The new methodology caused the economy to grow by 10 percent in US dollar terms.
 - B. The new methodology revealed that previous estimates were slightly higher than reality.
 - C. The new methodology was created specifically to hide the impact of global wars.
 - D. The new methodology is considered inaccurate compared to the outgoing GDP series.
6. **Select the most appropriate synonym of the given word. ACRIMONIOUS**
 - A. Harsh
 - B. Sharp
 - C. Resentful
 - D. Bitter
7. **Select the most appropriate antonym of the given word. Prodigious**
 - A. Meagre
 - B. Phenomenal
 - C. Enormous
 - D. Monumental
8. **Select the correct spelling of the term used to describe 'a witty, paradoxical saying or remark'.**

- A. Epigramme
B. Epigrahm
C. Epigram
D. Epigream
9. **Select the correctly spelled word meaning 'an expression of praise'.**
A. Accollade
B. Accolade
C. Acolade
D. Akcolade
10. **Identify the misspelt word:**
A. Plenipotentiary
B. Utilitarianism
C. Syzgy
D. Naturalism
11. **A sentence is provided in direct speech. From the four given options, choose the one that most accurately conveys the sentence in its corresponding indirect speech.**
"If I were you, I would not trust such vague promises," said the mentor.
A. The mentor said that if he were me, he wouldn't trust such vague promises.
B. The mentor said if he had been me, he wouldn't trust vague promises.
C. The mentor said that if he were me, he would not trust such vague promises.
D. The mentor said he would not trust such vague promises if he were me.
12. **What is the one-word substitute for "a person who questions or rejects generally accepted opinions or beliefs"?**
A. Heretic
B. Iconoclast
C. Dissenter
D. Apostate
13. **What is the one-word substitute for: "The act of a writer deliberately avoiding a resolution to a narrative, leaving it open-ended or ambiguous"?**
A. Denouement
B. Cliffhanger
C. Pastiche
D. Pathetic Fallacy
14. **Choose the correct meaning of idiom given below:**
"A dime a dozen"
A. Rare item
B. Very common
C. Very costly
D. Fake currency
15. **Find the part of the sentence that contains an error:**
The audible protest (1)/ by the silent demonstrator confused the officials (2)/ and media alike. (3)/no error (4)
A. (1)
B. (2)

C. (3)

D. (4)

16. **Find the part of the sentence that contains an error:**

She claimed that she (1)/ had already submitted the report (2)/ before her supervisor (3)/ requests it again. (4)

A. (1)

B. (2)

C. (3)

D. (4)

17. **Fill in the blank with the most appropriate option:**

He said he ___ the file by Friday, but he never did.

A. would submit

B. submits

C. has submitted

D. had submitted

18. **Choose the most suitable option to replace the underlined part of the sentence:**

No sooner had she entered the room when the lights went off.

A. than

B. then

C. but

D. when

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

The budget proposals will have been finalized by the finance ministry before the end of the fiscal year.

A. The finance ministry has finalized the budget proposals before the end of the fiscal year.

B. The finance ministry will be finalizing the budget proposals before the end of the fiscal year.

C. The finance ministry finalizes the budget proposals before the end of the fiscal year.

D. The finance ministry will have finalized the budget proposals before the end of the fiscal year.

20. **Direction: The sentences given below are in a jumbled order. S1 and S6 are fixed. Arrange the others (P, Q, R, S) in the most logical order to form a coherent paragraph.**

S1: Tim Cook is stepping down as Apple's CEO after 15 years, paving the way for John Ternus to take the helm on 1 September 2026.

P: His journey at Apple began quietly in 2001, joining the product design team after a brief stint as a mechanical engineer elsewhere.

Q: This transition marks the end of a celebrated era, with Cook moving into a new role as executive chairman of the \$4 trillion company.

R: Over the decades, his influence expanded from designing Mac screens to overseeing the hardware for nearly every major product, from the iPhone to Vision Pro.

S: While Ternus lacks the public profile of his predecessors, his reputation within the company's secretive corridors has been ironclad for years.

S6: Having previously served as the senior vice president of hardware engineering, Ternus now assumes full responsibility for the future of the technology giant.

- A. Q-S-P-R
- B. P-R-Q-S
- C. Q-P-R-S
- D. S-Q-P-R

Comprehension

On 20 April 1936, Ellison Brown was running up a steep hill on Commonwealth Avenue. It was mile 20 of the Boston Marathon, and he was entering a critical (1) ___ of the race. As he climbed the calf-aching 3.5% incline, there was an unexpected pat on his back. A second later, the previous year's winner, renowned runner Johnny Kelley, (2) ___ past him. The message was clear: "Nice try, pal".

But all of a sudden, Brown surged forward. He sprinted up the half-mile hill and began a (3) ___ with Kelley. The 500,000 spectators lining the course were stunned as they watched Brown cross the finish line first. Few watching had ever seen the fleet-footed 22-year-old, but soon his nickname would (4) ___ the front pages of newspapers across the country: "Tarzan" Brown. Brown's victory was one of the biggest upsets in Boston Marathon history, and today, Kelley's unexpected loss is the reason why this (5) ___ stretch of Commonwealth Avenue is still known as "Heartbreak Hill". Not only was Brown virtually unknown before the race, but the Narragansett tribe member was one of just a handful of Native American racers to ever compete in the world's most prestigious marathon, and the first to ever win.

21. **What should come in the place of blank number (1)?**
 - A. segment
 - B. stretch
 - C. lap
 - D. corridor
22. **What should come in the place of blank number (2)?**
 - A. darted
 - B. galloped
 - C. trotted
 - D. strutted
23. **What should come in the place of blank number (3)?**
 - A. cat-and-mouse game
 - B. tug of war
 - C. neck-and-neck battle
 - D. wild goose chase
24. **What should come in the place of blank number (4)?**
 - A. grace
 - B. plaster
 - C. adorn
 - D. emblazon
25. **What should come in the place of blank number (5)?**
 - A. pivotal
 - B. perilous
 - C. ominous
 - D. fateful

Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

- B) Japan and the UK have overtaken India in nominal GDP rankings as of early 2026.**
 The passage states: "India has slipped to sixth place... with Japan and the UK overtaking it in terms of nominal GDP."
 (A) : The passage says India will become the third-largest economy only by 2031.
 (C) : The passage says India will overtake the UK and Japan in 2027, not fall behind Germany.
 (D) : The passage pegs the UK at \$4.27 trillion and Japan at \$4.38 trillion, not India at \$4.38 trillion.
- D) The US dollar weakened against the Indian rupee due to the imposition of US tariffs.**
 The passage states the rupee weakened against the dollar, and specifically notes: "the US dollar itself has actually weakened against most other major currencies." It does not say the dollar weakened against the rupee.
 (A) Line: "government has made a whole host of methodological changes and incorporated newer data sources."
 (B) Line: "this update also found that the outgoing series was overestimating India's GDP by around three to four per cent."
 (C) Line: "Over the past year, the Indian rupee has weakened by almost 10 per cent against the US dollar."
- B) Realistic and cautionary, balancing future potential with necessary reforms.**
 The author presents the data soberly, acknowledges the slide, but notes the future projections ("That should not, however, draw away from the need to push forward aggressively..."). This balanced view is realistic and cautionary.
 (A) : The author views the new methodology as providing a "more accurate picture," not as "flawed."
 (C) : The author explicitly says it is "prudent for policymakers to factor such risks [shocks] into their strategies."
 (D) : The author uses language like "notwithstanding the slide" and emphasizes the need for "politically contentious" reforms, which is not jubilant.
- A) These reforms are necessary to address politically contentious areas hindering progress.**
 The passage specifically identifies these two sectors as being difficult to change: "...especially in the more politically contentious areas such as electricity and fertilisers."
 (B) : The passage never ranks these sectors by their contribution to the \$4.15 trillion figure.
 (C) : The author suggests the need for reform, but does not say the IMF made it a "legal condition" for the forecast.
 (D) : The passage blames the Rupee's weakness on US tariffs and trade deal uncertainty, not on electricity or fertilizer sectors.
- B) The new methodology revealed that previous estimates were slightly higher than reality.**
 The passage states that the old way of counting was overestimating the numbers: "...outgoing series was overestimating India's GDP by around three to four per cent."

(A) : The methodology caused a reduction in the Rupee value (Rs 357 trillion down to Rs 345 trillion), not a 10% growth.

(C) : The author says the methodology was updated for "accuracy" and to use "newer data sources," not to hide war impacts.

(D) : The author calls the new system "more accurate," so they believe it is better than the outgoing series.

6. D) **Bitter**

ACRIMONIOUS means having or showing a ready disposition to find fault; harsh or bitter in nature, especially in speech or manner.

- **Harsh** — means unpleasantly rough; close but not the best fit for the bitterness of feeling implied.
- **Sharp** — means having a cutting edge; does not capture the bitterness.
- **Resentful** — means feeling indignation; close but acrimonious specifically implies bitterness in expression.

अर्थ: ACRIMONIOUS का अर्थ है कड़वा/तीखा (विशेषतः बोलने के तरीके में)। इसका सबसे उपयुक्त synonym है Bitter।

7. A) **Meagre**

Prodigious means remarkably or impressively great in extent, size, or degree. Its antonym is Meagre (very small or inadequate in amount).

- **Phenomenal** — means extraordinary; this is a synonym, not an antonym.
- **Enormous** — means very large; also a synonym.
- **Monumental** — means great in importance; also similar in meaning.

अर्थ: Prodigious का अर्थ है असाधारण रूप से बड़ा/विशाल। इसका विलोम (antonym) है Meagre — जिसका अर्थ है बहुत कम/अपर्याप्त।

8. C) **Epigram**

The correct spelling is Epigram — a short, witty, and often paradoxical saying or remark.

अर्थ: एक चतुर, व्यंग्यात्मक या विरोधाभासी कथन के लिए सही spelling है Epigram।

9. B) **Accolade**

The correct spelling is Accolade — meaning an award or privilege granted as a special honour, or an expression of praise.

10. C) **Syzgy**

The misspelt word is Syzgy. The correct spelling is Syzygy — meaning the alignment of three or more celestial bodies in a straight line.

- **Plenipotentiary** — correctly spelled; means a person with full authority to act on behalf of a government.
- **Utilitarianism** — correctly spelled; the ethical doctrine that the greatest good for the greatest number should guide actions.
- **Naturalism** — correctly spelled; a style of art or literature that depicts reality.

गलत spelling वाला शब्द है Syzgy — इसकी सही spelling Syzygy है।

11. C) "The mentor said that if he were me, he would not trust such vague promises."

rules:

1. "said" is used (no indirect object), so it remains "said that."

2. The hypothetical conditional "If I were you" remains "if he were me" — subjunctive mood does not change in indirect speech.

3. "would not" remains "would not" (no backshift needed for hypothetical conditionals).

4. "such vague promises" is retained correctly.

A — uses contraction "wouldn't" which is acceptable but less formal; the structure is essentially the same but less precise.

B— changes "if he were me" to "if he had been me" (wrong; changes the hypothetical to past perfect).

D— changes word order and omits "that"; incorrect.

अर्थ: Direct speech → Indirect: "The mentor said that if he were me, he would not trust such vague promises."

12. B) **Iconoclast** — a person who attacks or criticises cherished beliefs or institutions; one who questions or rejects generally accepted opinions.

- **Heretic** — refers specifically to someone whose religious beliefs differ from official doctrine; more narrow in scope.
- **Dissenter** — means someone who disagrees with an established institution or opinion; less specific about "generally accepted beliefs."
- **Apostate** — means a person who renounces a religious belief; too specific to religion.

अर्थ: जो व्यक्ति सामान्यतः स्वीकृत मतों या विश्वासों पर प्रश्न उठाता है, उसके लिए एक-शब्द प्रतिस्थापन है Iconoclast।

13. B) **Cliffhanger** — a story or situation that is full of suspense, or whose conclusion is uncertain; deliberately left open-ended or unresolved by the writer.

- **Denouement** — refers to the final part of a story where everything is resolved; the opposite of what is described.
- **Pastiche** — a work that imitates the style of another artist or period; unrelated to open-ended narratives.
- **Pathetic Fallacy** — the attribution of human emotions to nature; unrelated to narrative resolution.

अर्थ: जब कोई लेखक जानबूझकर कहानी को अनसुलझा छोड़ता है, तो उसके लिए एक-शब्द है Cliffhanger।

14. B) **Very common**

The idiom "A dime a dozen" means something that is very common, easily available, and not particularly special or valuable.

Example: "Good writers are a dime a dozen these days."

15. D) **No error**

16. D) **"requests it again."**

The sentence uses reported speech ("She claimed that she..."). According to the rule of sequence of tenses in indirect speech, the verb in the subordinate clause must be backshifted. Since the reporting verb "claimed" is in simple past, "requests" (present tense) must be changed to "had requested" (past perfect) or "requested" (simple past).

Correct: "She claimed that she had already submitted the report before her supervisor had requested it again."

अर्थ: त्रुटि part (4) में है — "requests" present tense है, लेकिन reported speech के नियम (sequence of tenses) के अनुसार यह "requested/had requested" होना चाहिए।

17. A) "would submit".

The sentence uses indirect speech with a past reporting verb "said." In reported speech, a future intention ("will submit") becomes "would submit" (future-in-the-past). The second clause "but he never did" confirms the action was planned but not completed — consistent with "would submit."

18. A) "than".

The correlative conjunction pair for this structure is "No sooner...than". This is a fixed grammatical expression used for two events where one happens immediately after the other. Correct sentence: "No sooner had she entered the room than the lights went off."

19. D) "The finance ministry will have finalized the budget proposals before the end of the fiscal year."

Passive: "The budget proposals will have been finalized by the finance ministry..." (Future Perfect Passive)

Active: Subject (The finance ministry) + Future Perfect (will have finalized) + Object (the budget proposals).

A— "has finalized" is Present Perfect; incorrect tense.

B— "will be finalizing" is Future Continuous; incorrect.

C— "finalizes" is Simple Present; incorrect.

अर्थ: Future Perfect Passive → Active: "The finance ministry will have finalized the budget proposals before the end of the fiscal year."

20. A) Q-S-P-R

Sentence Q, पैराग्राफ की शुरुआत में आएगा क्योंकि यह S1 में घोषित "नेतृत्व परिवर्तन" (leadership change) का परिणाम बताता है। यह रिपोर्ट को एक factual ground प्रदान करता है कि टिम कुक अब "executive chairman" की भूमिका निभाएंगे।

Sentence S, Sentence Q के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह "Why" पेश करता है। यह नए CEO, जॉन टर्नस, की पहचान और उनकी आंतरिक प्रतिष्ठा (internal reputation) को उनके कम सार्वजनिक प्रोफाइल से जोड़ता है। यह उनके व्यक्तित्व को समझने के लिए एक big test है।

Sentence P, Sentence S के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह उस "reputation" के इतिहास का विस्तार (elaboration) करता है। यह specific detail देता है कि टर्नस ने 2001 में एक मामूली प्रोडक्ट डिज़ाइनर के रूप में अपना सफर कैसे शुरू किया था।

Sentence R, Sentence P के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह पूरे परिदृश्य को एक conclusion (निष्कर्ष) देता है। उनके करियर की शुरुआत बताने के बाद, R उनके विकास को दिखाता है—कैसे वे आईफोन और विज़न प्रो जैसी सभी बड़ी मशीनों के प्रभारी बने, जो सीधे S6 से जुड़ता है।

- Sentence Q comes at the beginning because it identifies the immediate consequence of the leadership change mentioned in S1. It provides the essential factual ground by defining Cook's new role as executive chairman within the \$4 trillion firm.
- Sentence S follows Sentence Q because it introduces the "Why." It contrasts Ternus's low public profile with his "ironclad" internal reputation, serving as a critical test of why he was chosen for the role.

- Sentence P follows Sentence S because it provides an elaboration on Ternus's background. It adds specific details regarding his humble beginnings at Apple in 2001 on the product design team.
 - Sentence R follows Sentence P because it serves as the logical conclusion for the sequence. After detailing his start, R tracks his trajectory to overseeing nearly all of Apple's physical architecture, which leads directly into the final summary in S6.
21. B) [**stretch**] सही है क्योंकि road या racecourse के किसी सीधे और लंबे हिस्से को हमेशा 'stretch' कहा जाता है। Passage यह imply कर रहा है कि 20 मील दौड़ने के बाद Brown marathon के सबसे मुश्किल और ज़रूरी हिस्से (final stretch) में पहुँच गया था। Segment बहुत technical word है (जैसे data का हिस्सा)। Lap का मतलब track का एक पूरा चक्कर लगाना होता है, जबकि marathon सड़क पर सीधी दौड़ी जाती है। Corridor किसी बिल्डिंग के गलियारे को कहते हैं।
- [stretch] is correct because it is the specific, natural word used for a continuous, straight section of a road or a racecourse. The passage implies that at mile 20, Brown was entering the most physically demanding and crucial physical part of the marathon route. Segment is too mathematical or technical (like a piece of data or a pie chart). Lap refers to a full circuit around a circular track, but a marathon is a point-to-point road race. Corridor refers to an enclosed indoor hallway or a narrow geographical passage.
22. C) [**trotted**] सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब बहुत ही आराम से (moderate pace पर) दौड़ना या जॉगिंग करना होता है। Passage यह imply कर रहा है कि Kelley ने बहुत ही insulting तरीके से और बिना ज़्यादा मेहनत किए Brown को पीछे छोड़ा (पीठ थपथपाते हुए)। Strutted का मतलब अकड़ कर चलना होता है (इसमें दौड़ना नहीं होता)। Galloped का इस्तेमाल घोड़ों की दौड़ के लिए होता है। Darted का मतलब अचानक से बहुत तेज़ी से भागना होता है, जो 'आराम से पीठ थपथपाने' वाले vibe से मैच नहीं करता।
- [trotted] is correct because it means running at a moderate, relaxed, and easy pace. The passage implies an insulting arrogance from Johnny Kelley: he didn't sprint past Brown; he passed him with such relaxed ease (giving him a patronizing pat) that he wasn't even trying hard. Strutted means walking arrogantly with chest puffed out (no running involved). Galloped is for horses or running with huge, bounding leaps. Darted implies a sudden, extremely fast burst of speed, which contradicts the relaxed "pat on the back" vibe.
23. C) [**neck-and-neck battle**] सही है क्योंकि "neck-and-neck" रेसिंग का एक exact idiom (मुहावरा) है जिसका मतलब दो लोगों का बिल्कुल बराबरी पर (कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर) कांटे की टक्कर करना होता है। Passage यह imply कर रहा है कि पहाड़ी पर उन दोनों के बीच एक भयंकर और नज़दीकी रेस शुरू हो गई थी जहाँ कोई हार नहीं मानना चाहता था। Cat-and-mouse game एक idiom है जिसका मतलब बिल्ली-चूहे का खेल (जहाँ एक मज़बूत इंसान कमज़ोर के साथ चालाकी से खेलता है) होता है, बराबरी की रेस नहीं। Tug of war (रस्साकशी) का मतलब power struggle होता है जहाँ दो पार्टियाँ opposite direction में खींचती हैं। Wild goose chase एक idiom है जिसका मतलब किसी बेकार या न मिलने वाली चीज़ के पीछे भागना होता है।
- [neck-and-neck battle] is correct because "neck-and-neck" is an exact racing idiom for a competition where two rivals are completely level, fighting fiercely for the lead. The passage implies a thrilling, desperate race up the hill where neither runner was willing to give up an inch. Cat-and-mouse game is an idiom for a situation where a stronger opponent is hunting or toying with a weaker one, not an equal race. Tug of war is an

idiom for a power struggle where two sides pull in opposite directions, whereas these runners are going in the same direction. Wild goose chase is an idiom meaning a foolish, hopeless search for something that doesn't exist.

24. A) [grace] सही है क्योंकि जब कोई इंसान अपनी कामयाबी से किसी अखबार या मैगज़ीन के front page की शोभा बढ़ाता है, तो उसे "grace the cover/front page" कहा जाता है। Passage यह imply कर रहा है कि वह unknown लड़का अब पूरे देश के अखबारों के लिए एक सम्मानित (celebrated) नाम बन गया था। Plaster का मतलब किसी चीज़ से पूरी तरह चिपका देना होता है (अक्सर negative tone में)। Adorn का मतलब सजावट (decoration) करना होता है। Emblazon का इस्तेमाल कपड़ों या ढाल पर logo छापने के लिए होता है।

- [grace] is correct because it means to bring honor, beauty, or prestige to something (like a newspaper cover) by being featured on it. The passage implies that from being an unknown runner, his legendary victory instantly turned his name into a celebrated, highly respected headline nationwide. Plaster means to cover a surface heavily, but it has a messy or negative tone (like tabloids plastering rumors). Adorn means to physically decorate with ornaments. Emblazon is usually used for printing a bold design or logo on clothing or shields.

25. D) [fateful] सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब कोई ऐसा ऐतिहासिक पल (historic moment) होता है जिसके नतीजे हमेशा के लिए इतिहास बदल दें। Passage यह imply कर रहा है कि उस सड़क पर हुई घटना ने हमेशा के लिए उस जगह का नाम "Heartbreak Hill" रखवा दिया (यह एक destiny बदलने वाला पल था)। Pivotal का मतलब turning point होता है, लेकिन इसमें 'fateful' जैसी ऐतिहासिक और dramatic feeling नहीं है। Perilous का मतलब जानलेवा (dangerous) होता है। Ominous का मतलब मनहूस या डरावना संकेत होता है।

- [fateful] is correct because it describes a specific moment or event that has far-reaching, historic, and often dramatic consequences. The passage implies that this wasn't just a normal part of the road; what happened on this hill changed marathon history forever and permanently gave the hill its famous name ("Heartbreak Hill"). Pivotal means a turning point, but lacks the "destiny/historic naming" weight of fateful. Perilous means extremely dangerous (life-threatening). Ominous means giving a spooky warning that something bad is about to happen.