

Compounding gains: On the India-New Zealand FTA

The New Zealand Free Trade Agreement **builds on** seven recent FTAs

The India-New Zealand Free Trade **agreement** (FTA) signed on Monday might **look underwhelming** when viewed **in isolation**, but **is nevertheless** significant when **looking at** what has been happening over the last five to six years. This **impression** is because New Zealand's **economy** is one-sixteenth the size of India's, and **makes up** less than 1% of India's total trade. Yet, this **view** ignores the fact that the FTA comes soon after the signing of, or closure of **negotiations** on, seven other trade agreements in the past three and a half years or so. It also ignores the larger policy goals that India is trying to achieve through such deals. The COVID-19 pandemic and the U.S. tariff **frictions** have shown India that it needs to **diversify** supply chains on the import and export sides. **Weaning off** imports from China **is** a tough task. Yet, any **chipping away** of the 16% of India's imports that China **accounts for** would **be** welcome. **Importantly**, the strategic **need** to diversify export destinations, especially while the **mercurial** Donald Trump is **in charge of** India's largest export market, **is** clear and urgent. The trade deals with Mauritius, the UAE, Australia, the EFTA nations, the U.K., the EU, Oman, and now New Zealand all provide Indian exporters opportunities that they should **take advantage of**. Finally, **dismissing** this FTA on the basis of its size would **be** unfair to India's negotiators who have done well to use India's comparative advantage to **push through** key victories.

The first **key strength** of the FTA for India, and **unprecedented**, **is** that New Zealand will remove all **goods tariffs** immediately on **execution** of the agreement. The second strength is that India managed to avoid providing any **concessions** on any of its sensitive sectors. **Key** among these **exclusions** **is** dairy, something New Zealand had been especially **keen** to include. The third positive is New Zealand's commitment to **facilitate** investments in India worth \$20 billion over 15 years. This is similar to the provisions in the EFTA trade **pact**, wherein the four EFTA countries committed to facilitate \$100 billion of investments in India over 15 years. **To be sure**, these are commitments to facilitate and not commitments to invest, but **getting** them included in the text of the deal **is** nevertheless **significant**. To help this along, India will create a dedicated desk to **address** any issues New Zealander investors might face. Such a targeted **approach** to foreign investment **is** necessary if India wants to achieve the multiple goals of weaning off China, increasing and diversifying exports, creating jobs, **bolstering** the **capital account**, and generally increasing incomes. The other **long-standing need** of helping domestic manufacturers **scale up** **remains** a **sticky** problem. [Practice Exercise]

- **Address** (verb) – Tackle, deal with, attend to, handle, confront, समाधान करना
- **Friction** (noun) – Hostility, conflict, tension, discord, strife टकराव
- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

Vocabulary

1. **Compound** (verb) - accumulate, augment, intensify, magnify, amass संचित होना
2. **Build on** (phrasal verb) - to use something as a base for further development पर आधारित होना
3. **Underwhelming** (adjective) - uninspiring, mediocre, disappointing, lackluster, flat अप्रभावी
4. **In isolation** (phrase) - separately, individually अलग से
5. **Nevertheless** (adverb) - nonetheless, notwithstanding, however फिर भी
6. **Significant** (adjective) - substantial, meaningful, considerable, momentous, noteworthy महत्वपूर्ण
7. **Look at** (phrasal verb) - to examine or consider a situation carefully विचार करना
8. **Impression** (noun) - perception, notion, belief, feeling, opinion धारणा
9. **Economy** (noun) - the system by which a country produces, distributes, and uses goods and services अर्थव्यवस्था
10. **Make up** (phrasal verb) - to form or constitute something हिस्सा होना
11. **View** (noun) - perspective, outlook, standpoint, opinion, stance दृष्टिकोण
12. **Negotiation** (noun) - the process of discussing something to reach an agreement between two or more parties मोलभाव
13. **Diversify** (verb) - vary, branch out, expand, modify, transform विविधता लाना
14. **Wean off** (phrasal verb) - to gradually stop someone from using something धीरे-धीरे अलग करना
15. **Chip away** (phrasal verb) - to gradually make something weaker or less effective धीरे-धीरे काटना
16. **Account for** (phrasal verb) - to form a particular amount or part of something का कारण होना
17. **Importantly** (adverb) - significantly, crucially, essentially, fundamentally, primarily महत्वपूर्ण रूप से
18. **Mercurial** (adjective) - volatile, capricious, temperamental, fickle, erratic अस्थिर
19. **In charge of** (phrase) - responsible for, supervising, overseeing, managing का प्रभारी
20. **Take advantage of** (phrase) - to make good use of an opportunity का लाभ उठाना
21. **Dismiss** (verb) - reject, disregard, ignore, repudiate, spurn खारिज करना
22. **Push through** (phrasal verb) - to get a plan officially accepted despite opposition और मुश्किलों के बावजूद पास कराना
23. **Key** (adjective) - fundamental, essential, pivotal, critical, main मुख्य

24. **Unprecedented** (adjective) - unparalleled, unmatched, record-breaking, singular, novel अभूतपूर्व
25. **Goods tariffs** (noun) - taxes on imported and exported items वस्तुओं पर आयात शुल्क
26. **Execution** (noun) - implementation, performance, enactment, discharge, fulfillment कार्यान्वयन
27. **Concession** (noun) - compromise, allowance, surrender, grant, yield रियायत
28. **Exclusion** (noun) - omission, elimination, rejection, exception, debarment छूट (बाहर रखना)
29. **Keen** (adjective) - eager, anxious, enthusiastic, impatient, dying उत्सुक होना
30. **Facilitate** (verb) - expedite, assist, promote, simplify, ease सुगम बनाना
31. **Pact** (noun) - treaty, accord, agreement, protocol, covenant समझौता
32. **To be sure** (phrase) - used to admit that something is true निश्चित रूप से
33. **Bolster** (verb) - strengthen, reinforce, fortify, support, underpin मजबूत करना
34. **Capital account** (noun) - records of all transactions between residents and the rest of the world पूंजी खाता
35. **Long-standing** (adjective) - enduring, persistent, age-old, chronic, established लंबे समय से चला आ रहा
36. **Scale up** (phrasal verb) - to increase the size or importance of something बढ़ाना
37. **Sticky** (adjective) - difficult, awkward, tricky, problematic, thorny कठिन

Summary of the Editorial

1. The India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) may appear small in isolation but is important in a broader context.
2. New Zealand’s economy is much smaller than India’s and contributes less than 1% to India’s total trade.
3. However, the FTA gains significance as it is part of a series of seven recent trade agreements signed by India.
4. These agreements reflect India’s evolving long-term trade and economic strategy.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic and U.S. tariff tensions highlighted the risks of overdependence on limited trade partners.
6. India aims to diversify both its import sources and export markets.
7. Reducing dependence on China, which accounts for about 16% of India’s imports, is a key goal.
8. Expanding export destinations is also crucial, especially given uncertainties in the U.S. market.
9. Recent FTAs with countries like Mauritius, UAE, Australia, the UK, EU, Oman, and others support this diversification strategy.
10. Indian exporters are expected to benefit from these new trade opportunities.
11. The FTA ensures that New Zealand will eliminate all tariffs on goods immediately after implementation.
12. India successfully protected its sensitive sectors and did not offer concessions, especially in dairy.
13. New Zealand has committed to facilitating \$20 billion in investments in India over 15 years.
14. India will establish a dedicated mechanism to support and resolve issues for New Zealand investors.
15. Despite these gains, scaling up domestic manufacturing remains a key challenge for India’s long-term economic growth.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What can be inferred about the strategic importance of the India-New Zealand FTA despite the relatively small size of New Zealand's economy?** [Editorial page]
 - a. It serves as a tactical component of India's broader objective to reduce its 16% import dependency on China.
 - b. It acts as a safeguard to diversify export destinations amid unpredictable trade relations with India's largest export market.
 - c. The deal is a achievement that marks the first time India has engaged in trade negotiations since the COVID-19 pandemic.

A. Only a and b
B. Only a and c
C. Only b and c
D. All a, b and c
2. **Which of the following can be the potential practical hindrances in realizing the full benefits of the investment facilitation mentioned in the passage?**
Use your own understanding.
 - A. The distinction between a commitment to facilitate and a guaranteed investment may lead to lower actual capital inflow than projected.
 - B. Bureaucratic red tape within India might hinder the effectiveness of the dedicated desk intended to assist New Zealander investors.
 - C. New Zealand's small economic scale might limit the number of private entities capable of fulfilling large-scale investment goals.
 - D. All a, b and c
3. Such a targeted approach to foreign investment is necessary if India wants to achieve _____.
 - a. the goal of bolstering the capital account and increasing general incomes
 - b. the objective of helping domestic manufacturers overcome the sticky problem of scaling up
 - c. the diversification of exports and the creation of domestic employment

A. Only a and b
B. Only a and c
C. Only b and c
D. All a, b and c
4. **The author's tone in the passage regarding the India-New Zealand FTA can best be described as—**
 - A. Dismissive and cynical
 - B. Objective yet appreciative
 - C. critical
 - D. speculative
5. **In the clause: "...dismissing this FTA on the basis of its size," what grammatical structure is "dismissing" a part of?**
 - A. A gerund phrase acting as the subject
 - B. A passive voice construction
 - C. A relative clause

- D. A finite verb in the present continuous tense
6. **Select the most appropriate MEANING of the noun "Spurt."**
- A. To detect a hidden and large variation in research
 - B. To divert a formal and clear protocol in politics
 - C. To design a modern and sleek interface in software
 - D. To denote a sudden and brief increment in activity
7. **Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the word "Eliminate."**
- A. Establish
 - B. Enunciate
 - C. Embellish
 - D. Elucidate
8. **Fill in the blank with the most appropriate verb:**
The witness _____ under cross-examination, revealing inconsistencies in the testimony.
- A. collapsed
 - B. admitted
 - C. faltered
 - D. insisted
9. **What is the correct meaning of the idiom "Jump on the bandwagon"?**
- A. Oppose a trend
 - B. Join a popular trend
 - C. Ignore others
 - D. Start something new
10. **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:** Over 27 lakh West Bengal voters found themselves unable to participate in Wednesday's polls after their names were deleted due to "logical discrepancies."
- P:** This bottleneck exists despite the appointment of 19 Appellate Tribunals, which have cleared fewer than 2,000 of the 34 lakh-odd pending appeals.
- Q:** The crisis is deepened by the EC's centralised portal, ECINET, which notably lacks a feature for users to upload any supporting documentation.
- R:** Consequently, a shadow of uncertainty lengthens over the deleted voters, as it remains unclear if these tribunals are even permitted to accept fresh records.
- S:** Furthermore, significant procedural questions have arisen regarding whether appellants can submit identity proof beyond the 13 documents originally identified by the EC.
- S6:** With the polling day now concluded, these disenfranchised citizens remain in a state of limbo regarding their future electoral eligibility.
- A. Q-P-S-R
 - B. P-S-Q-R
 - C. P-Q-S-R
 - D. S-P-Q-R
11. **Choose the most suitable option to replace the highlighted part of the sentence:**
This aspects will be tested while dealing with the emerging scenario in our western neighbourhood.

- A. This aspects will be testing while dealing
B. This aspects will be tester while dealing
C. This aspects would be tested while dealing
D. These aspects will be tested while dealing
12. **Choose the most suitable one-word substitution for the following.**
The art of motion-picture photography.
A. Calligraphy
B. Cinematography
C. Lithography
D. Photography
13. **Identify the correct spelling of the misspelled word.**
A. convincing
B. convincable
C. convincible
D. convinsible
14. **Read the following sentences to find whether there is any error in any part**
It is appearing to me (a)/ that you are working against (b)/ your friends. (c) no error (d)
A. It is appearing to me
B. that you are working against
C. your friends
D. no error
15. **Which of the following options is the most suitable conversion of the following sentence into active voice?**
Was the speech delivered by the prime minister at the international summit?
A. Did the prime minister deliver the speech at the international summit?
B. Has the prime minister delivered the speech at the international summit?
C. Is the prime minister delivering the speech at the international summit?
D. Will the prime minister deliver the speech at the international summit?
16. **Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the word "Arbitrary."**
A. Methodical
B. Mercurial
C. Mendacious
D. Mellifluous
17. **Select the most appropriate SYNONYM of the word "Accountability."**
A. Lassitude
B. Lucidity
C. Liability
D. Lineament
18. **The following sentence has two blanks. Choose the most suitable set of prepositions from the given options to fill in the blanks and complete the sentence meaningfully:**
His fascination ____ mythology grew ____ exposure to ancient texts.
A. of, by
B. with, through

- C. for, from
D. at, under
19. **Choose the most suitable option to replace the highlighted part of the sentence:**
"Twenty minutes has been the time I need to get ready for the party."
A. Twenty minutes are the time
B. Twenty minutes is the time
C. Twenty minute is the time
D. Twenty minutes are the time needed
20. **Read the following sentences to find whether there is any error in any part :**
The victim tried (a)/ to tell us what has happened (b)/ but his words (c)/ were not audible. (d)
A. The victim tried
B. to tell us what has happened
C. but his words
D. were not audible

Comprehension

There's little in this (1) ___ corner in downtown Springfield, Missouri, to suggest that it's where one of the US's greatest road stories began. There's no grand (2) ___ or notable sign. In fact, you need to look carefully to spot the modest (3) ___ marking the site of the long-demolished Colonial Hotel, where, in 1926, a group of highway officials convened in order to name the brand-new Chicago-to-Los Angeles highway. A century on, the resulting two-digit moniker has become synonymous with American road culture. To understand why Springfield matters, you have to go back to the (4) ___ of the US Numbered Highway System in the mid-1920s. Federal and state officials were trying to replace a confusing patchwork of named auto trails – routes with grand titles like the Lincoln Highway and the National Old Trails Road – with a standardised national network. The proposed Chicago-to-LA road, which would run through Springfield, was important: it would connect the Midwest to the Southwest and California, linking big cities, farming regions and small-town main streets across the country. Crucially, the new route would be marked with a number, not a name; part of a broader (5) ___ to make cross-country driving easier to follow.

21. **What should come in the place of blank number (1)?**
A. desolate
B. inconspicuous
C. unassuming
D. mundane
22. **What should come in the place of blank number (2)?**
A. monument
B. shrine
C. landmark
D. memorial
23. **What should come in the place of blank number (3)?**
A. inscription
B. epitaph
C. engraving

- D. plaque
24. **What should come in the place of blank number (4)?**
- A. advent
 - B. creation
 - C. assembly
 - D. fabrication
25. **What should come in the place of blank number (5)?**
- A. thrust
 - B. Propulsion
 - C. surge
 - D. push

Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

1. A) (Only a and b)

Option a (Correct): The passage explicitly mentions that "any chipping away" of China's 16% import share is a welcome goal of these deals.

Option b (Correct): The passage states the "strategic need to diversify export destinations" is urgent due to the "mercurial" leadership of India's largest export market.

Option c (Incorrect): The passage contradicts this by stating India has signed or closed "seven other trade agreements in the past three and a half years."

2. D) All a, b and c

Option a (Correct): The passage explicitly warns that these are "commitments to facilitate and not commitments to invest," meaning there is no legal obligation for the money to actually arrive.

Option b (Correct): The passage mentions a "dedicated desk to address issues," but the actual benefit depends on whether India can bypass bureaucratic "red tape" to make that desk functional.

Option c (Correct): Since the passage states New Zealand is only "one-sixteenth the size of India," it implies a limited number of companies exist that are large enough to provide such massive investments.

3. B) Only a and c

Option a (Correct): The passage lists "bolstering the capital account" and "increasing incomes" as specific goals of this targeted approach.

Option b (Incorrect): The question asks what India wants to achieve through the "targeted approach" (the investment desk). The passage identifies FTA helps with exports and jobs (Options a and c), it does not solve the problem of domestic manufacturing. The word "remains" indicates that this specific goal is still unachieved and is not a direct result of the investment desk mentioned in the passage.

Option c (Correct): The passage explicitly links the targeted investment approach to "diversifying exports" and "creating jobs."

4. B) Objective yet appreciative

The author remains objective by noting the small size of the trade and the "sticky problems" that remain, but is appreciative of the "key victories" and "unprecedented" tariff removals secured by negotiators.

Option (a) (Incorrect): While the author acknowledges the deal might look "underwhelming," they spend the rest of the passage defending its significance and praising the negotiators, which is the opposite of being dismissive.

Option (c) (Incorrect): There is no criticism in the passage; instead, the author argues that "dismissing this FTA... would be unfair," showing support for the deal.

Option (d) (Incorrect): The passage is based on factual details of the signed agreement (tariffs, investment figures, specific exclusions) rather than speculation or guesses.

5. A) **A gerund phrase acting as the subject**

In the sentence, "dismissing this FTA on the basis of its size would be unfair," the word "dismissing" is a gerund (an -ing verb acting as a noun). It acts as the head of the phrase that serves as the subject of the verb "would be."

Option (b) (Incorrect): Passive voice requires a form of the verb "to be" plus a past participle (e.g., "was dismissed"). "Dismissing" is in the active form.

Option (c) (Incorrect): A relative clause usually begins with a relative pronoun like "who," "which," or "that" (e.g., "...negotiators who have done well").

Option (d) (Incorrect): A finite verb in the present continuous requires an auxiliary verb (e.g., "India is dismissing"). Here, "dismissing" stands alone as a noun-like entity, making it non-finite.

6. D) **Spurt** (noun) – Surge, increase, rise, jump, gush. (उछाल या तेजी)

7. A) **Eliminate** (verb) – To completely remove or get rid of something; to exclude from consideration. (खत्म करना)

Antonym: **Establish** (verb) – To set up on a firm or permanent basis; to initiate or bring into existence. (स्थापित करना)

- **Enunciate** (verb): To say or pronounce clearly; to express a proposition or theory in clear terms. (स्पष्ट रूप से बोलना)
- **Embellish** (verb): To make something more attractive by the addition of decorative details or features. (संवारना)
- **Elucidate** (verb): To make something lucid or clear; to explain or throw light upon a subject. (स्पष्ट करना)

8. C) **faltered** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि वाक्य में गवाह की स्थिति को दर्शाया जा रहा है जहाँ जिरह (cross-examination) के दौरान उसका बयान डगमगाया, जिसके कारण गवाही में असंगतियाँ (inconsistencies) सामने आईं। "Collapsed" पूर्ण टूटने का भाव देता है, "admitted" स्वीकार करने का, और "insisted" ज़ोर देने का – जो यहाँ उपयुक्त नहीं हैं। इसलिए faltered सबसे उचित है।

- 'Faltered' should be used because the sentence describes the witness wavering during cross-examination, which exposed inconsistencies in the testimony. "Collapsed" suggests a total breakdown, "admitted" implies confession, and "insisted" means asserting strongly – none of which convey the subtle failing or wavering that fits the context. Thus, faltered is the most appropriate choice.

9. B) "Jump on the bandwagon" means Join a popular trend लोकप्रिय चीज अपनाना.

10. B) **P-S-Q-R**

Sentence P, पैराग्राफ की शुरुआत में आएगा क्योंकि यह S1 में बताई गई समस्या के "विस्तार" (scale) की पहचान करता है। यह एक factual ground प्रदान करता है कि 34 लाख पेंडिंग अपीलों के मुकाबले ट्रिब्यूनल की गति कितनी धीमी है।

Sentence S, Sentence P के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह "Why" पेश करता है। यह केवल संख्या की समस्या नहीं है, बल्कि कानूनी और प्रक्रियात्मक सवाल (procedural questions) भी खड़े करता है कि कौन से दस्तावेज मान्य हैं। यह व्यवस्था की स्पष्टता के लिए एक big test है।

Sentence Q, Sentence S के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह उस प्रक्रियात्मक विफलता का विस्तार (elaboration) करता है। यह specific detail देता है कि तकनीकी स्तर पर (ECINET पोर्टल) भी दस्तावेज अपलोड करने की कोई सुविधा नहीं है।

Sentence R, Sentence Q के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह पूरे परिदृश्य को एक conclusion (निष्कर्ष) की ओर ले जाता है। यह तकनीकी और कानूनी समस्याओं को जोड़कर "अनिश्चितता के साये" (shadow of uncertainty) की बात करता है, जो सीधे S6 में दिए गए "limbo" (मझधार) वाले भाव से जुड़ता है।

- Sentence P comes at the beginning because it identifies the sheer scale of the administrative failure mentioned in S1. It provides the essential factual ground by contrasting the 34 lakh pending cases with the meager 2,000 cleared appeals.
- Sentence S follows Sentence P because it introduces the "Why" or the legal complexity. Beyond the numbers, it raises a critical test regarding the validity of additional identity documents that were not part of the initial list.
- Sentence Q follows Sentence S because it provides an elaboration on the practical barriers. It adds specific details about the ECINET portal's failure to allow digital uploads, making the submission of proof nearly impossible.
- Sentence R follows Sentence Q because it serves as the logical conclusion. It summarizes the cumulative effect of the administrative and technical failures—a "shadow of uncertainty"—which leads directly to the finality of S6.

11. D) 'These aspects will be tested while dealing' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'aspects' plural noun है, इसलिए 'this' के स्थान पर 'these' आएगा तथा 'will be tested' passive structure यहाँ सही है; जैसे—
These issues will be discussed in the meeting.

- 'These' will be used instead of 'This' because 'aspects' is a plural noun, so a plural demonstrative is required, and 'will be tested' is the correct passive structure in this context; Like—
These issues will be discussed in the meeting.

12. B) **Cinematography** (noun) – The art of motion-picture photography चलचित्र छायांकन की कला

- **Calligraphy** (noun) – The art of beautiful handwriting सुलेख कला
- **Lithography** (noun) – A method of printing using a flat surface मुद्रण की एक विधि
- **Photography** (noun) – The art of taking still pictures फोटोग्राफी

13. A) **convincing** — The correct spelling is convincing, which means able to persuade or causing belief.

अर्थ (Hindi): विश्वसनीय, प्रभावी

14. A) 'is appearing' के स्थान पर '**appears**' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि appear, seem, know, believe, understand जैसे verbs Stative Verbs हैं और इन्हें सामान्यतः Continuous Tense में नहीं प्रयोग किया जाता; जैसे— It seems to me that he is right.

- 'appears' will be used instead of 'is appearing' because verbs like appear, seem, know, understand are Stative Verbs and are generally not used in Continuous Tense; Like— It seems to me that he is right.

15. A) **Did the prime minister deliver the speech at the international summit?**

Passive से Active Voice में बदलने के लिए, Passive वाक्य का Subject (agent) Active वाक्य का Subject बन जाता है और Passive का Subject Active का Object बन जाता है। Interrogative sentence में

helping verb पहले आता है और सही tense बनाए रखा जाता है। दिए गए वाक्य में "the speech" Passive Subject है, "was delivered" Verb (Simple Past Passive) है और "by the prime minister" agent है। Active में बदलने पर "the prime minister" Subject बन गया है, Verb को "did deliver" (Simple Past Interrogative) में बदला गया है और "the speech" Object के रूप में प्रयोग हुआ है। इसलिए सही वाक्य होगा — "Did the prime minister deliver the speech at the international summit?"

To change a sentence from Passive to Active Voice, the agent becomes the subject and the passive subject becomes the object. In interrogative sentences, the helping verb comes first while maintaining the correct tense. Here, "the speech" (Passive Subject), "was delivered" (Simple Past Passive), and "by the prime minister" (agent) are transformed into "the prime minister" (Subject), "did deliver" (Active Verb in Simple Past Interrogative), and "the speech" (Object). Therefore, the correct sentence is — "Did the prime minister deliver the speech at the international summit?"

16. A) **Arbitrary** (adjective) – Based on random choice or personal whim, rather than any reason or system. (मनमाना)

Antonym: **Methodical** (adjective) – Done according to a systematic or established form of procedure; orderly and reasoned. (व्यवस्थित/नियमबद्ध)

- **Mercurial** (adjective): Subject to sudden or unpredictable changes of mood or mind. (अस्थिर)
- **Mendacious** (adjective): Not telling the truth; lying. (मिथ्या/झूठा)
- **Mellifluous** (adjective): (of a voice or words) sweet or musical; pleasant to hear. (मधुर)

17. C) **Accountability** (noun) – Responsibility, liability, answerability, blame, duty. (जवाबदेही)

Synonym: **Liability** (noun) – The state of being legally responsible for something; a person's debts. (दायित्व / देयता)

- **Lassitude** (noun): A state of physical or mental weariness; lack of energy. (थकान)
- **Lucidity** (noun): Clarity of expression; the quality of being easily understood. (स्पष्टता)
- **Lineament** (noun): A distinctive feature or characteristic, especially of the face. (विशेषता)

18. B) **with, through** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'fascination' के साथ सही preposition 'with' आती है, जो किसी विषय के प्रति गहरी रुचि को दर्शाती है। वहीं, 'grew through exposure' यह स्पष्ट करता है कि यह रुचि प्राचीन ग्रंथों के संपर्क के कारण विकसित हुई। इसलिए, "with, through" सबसे उपयुक्त विकल्प है।

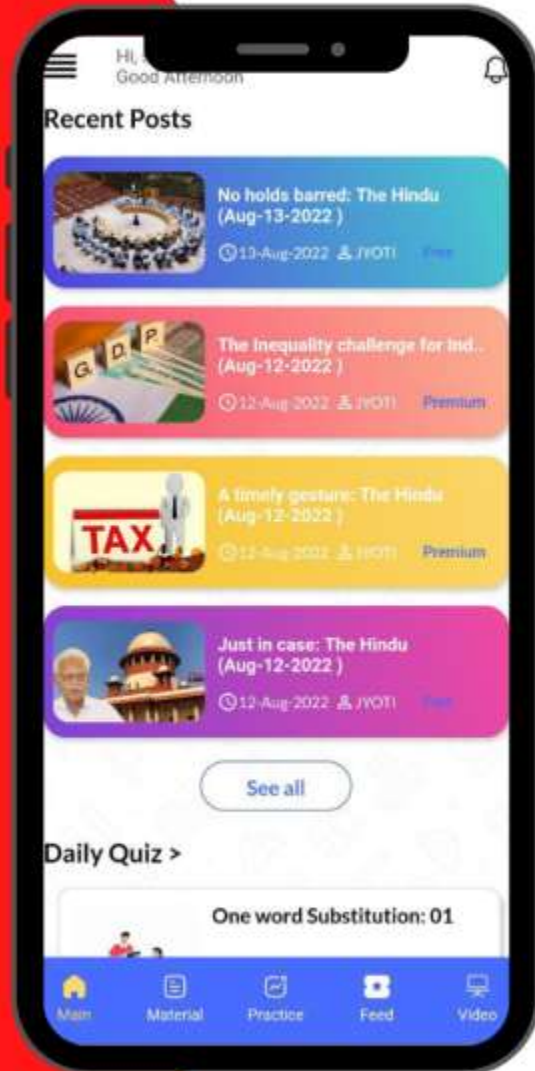
- 'with, through' should be used because 'fascination' correctly takes the preposition 'with' to show interest in a subject. Further, 'grew through exposure' indicates that this fascination developed as a result of being exposed to ancient texts. Hence, "with, through" is the most appropriate choice.

19. B) . **Twenty minutes is the time**

'Twenty minutes has been the time' के बदले 'Twenty minutes is the time' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि period of time जैसे— ten minutes, twenty minutes, three hours आदि जब एक single duration दर्शाते हैं, तो इनका verb singular होता है; जैसे— Ten years is a long time.

- 'Twenty minutes is the time' will be used instead of the highlighted part because expressions denoting a single period of time take a singular verb, therefore is is required; Like—
Ten years is a long time.
20. B) 'has happened' के स्थान पर '**had happened**' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि tried Past में है और उसके पहले की घटना को बताने के लिए Past Perfect Tense का प्रयोग किया जाता है; जैसे— He told us what had occurred.
- 'had happened' will be used instead of 'has happened' because tried is in Past Tense, and an event prior to another Past action takes Past Perfect Tense; Like— He told us what had occurred.
21. C) **unassuming** सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब बहुत ही साधारण और सादा होता है (जिसमें कोई दिखावा न हो)। यह जगह इतनी साधारण थी कि कोई सोच नहीं सकता यहाँ इतिहास बना था। Inconspicuous का मतलब ऐसी चीज़ होता है जो जानबूझकर छुपने की कोशिश कर रही हो (जैसे जासूस), जबकि सड़क का कोना छुप नहीं रहा है। Desolate का मतलब सुनसान या वीरान होता है (लेकिन यह 'downtown' का इलाका है)। Mundane का मतलब बहुत ही बोरिंग या नीरस होता है।
- unassuming is correct because it perfectly describes a physical place that is modest, does not show off, and lacks obvious grandeur, making its historical importance a surprise. Inconspicuous is a strong distractor, but it implies something that is actively blending in or deliberately trying not to be seen (like a spy), whereas a public street corner isn't hiding. Desolate means empty, barren, and abandoned, which is incorrect for a "downtown" area. Mundane means dull, boring, or tedious, carrying a negative judgment rather than just a simple lack of grand appearance.
22. A) **monument**] सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब कोई भी बड़ी इमारत या मूर्ति (स्मारक) होता है जिसे जानबूझकर किसी ऐतिहासिक घटना या इंसान की याद में बनाया गया हो। Memorial एक बहुत अच्छा (trap) था; इसका मतलब भी स्मारक होता है, लेकिन यह उन लोगों की याद में बनता है जिनकी मृत्यु हो गई हो। Landmark का मतलब कोई भी मशहूर जगह या निशान होता है जिससे रास्ता ढूँढने में मदद मिलती है। Shrine का मतलब कोई धार्मिक या पवित्र जगह (जैसे मंदिर या दरगाह) होता है।
- monument is correct because it broadly refers to a grand structure explicitly erected to commemorate a notable historical event or person (in this case, the birthplace of Route 66). Memorial is an excellent "near-miss" because it is also a commemorative structure, but it is specifically built to remember and mourn people who have died (usually in a war or tragedy). Landmark is a recognizable natural or artificial feature that helps people navigate; it becomes famous naturally, whereas the text implies looking for something deliberately built for commemoration. Shrine refers strictly to a holy or sacred place, which is inappropriate for a bureaucratic highway meeting.
23. D) **plaque**] सही है क्योंकि यह धातु (metal) या पत्थर की वह प्लेट होती है जिसे किसी जगह का इतिहास बताने के लिए दीवार पर लगाया जाता है। Inscription एक logical trap है; इसका मतलब प्लेट पर लिखी हुई 'लिखावट' होता है, लेकिन आप दीवार पर लगी पूरी प्लेट (plaque) को देखते हैं, सिर्फ लिखावट को नहीं। Epitaph का मतलब कब्र के पत्थर पर लिखे गए शब्द होता है। Engraving का मतलब किसी चीज़ पर डिज़ाइन उकेरने की कला होता है।

- plaque] is correct because it refers to the physical object—a flat piece of metal or stone—fixed to a wall to mark a historical site. Inscription is a grammatical and logical trap; it refers to the text itself that is carved into a surface. You do not "spot the modest text marking the site," you spot the physical metal board. Epitaph strictly means the words written on a tombstone in memory of a dead person. Engraving refers to the art or process of cutting a design, not the physical commemorative tablet itself.
24. B) **creation** सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब किसी चीज़ का जानबूझकर निर्माण करना या स्थापना करना होता है। Advent एक बहुत अच्छा विकल्प था, जिसका मतलब किसी युग का 'आगमन' (arrival) होता है, लेकिन creation अधिकारियों की 'मेहनत' को ज़्यादा अच्छे से दर्शाता है। Fabrication का मतलब कोई झूठी कहानी गढ़ना या फैक्ट्री में सामान बनाना होता है। Assembly का मतलब मशीन के पुर्जे जोड़ना या लोगों का इकट्ठा होना होता है।
- creation is correct because it highlights the deliberate, active process of building and establishing the Highway System by the officials mentioned in the very next sentence. Advent is a brilliant distractor meaning the arrival of a notable event ("the advent of the internet"), but it implies something happening naturally to society, whereas "creation" emphasizes the active work done by the government. Fabrication implies inventing a lie or physically manufacturing a product in a factory. Assembly strictly means fitting physical machine parts together or a gathering of people.
25. D) **push** सही है क्योंकि यहाँ यह एक noun की तरह इस्तेमाल हुआ है जिसका मतलब किसी बड़े लक्ष्य को पाने के लिए सरकार या अधिकारियों द्वारा किया गया एक संगठित प्रयास (organized effort) होता है। Propulsion एक बहुत ही शानदार trap है; इसका मतलब भी आगे धकेलना होता है, लेकिन यह सिर्फ मशीनी या शारीरिक ताकत के लिए इस्तेमाल होता है (जैसे रॉकेट)। Thrust का मतलब अचानक से किया गया वार या किसी बहस का मुख्य बिंदु होता है। Surge का मतलब पानी या भीड़ का अचानक से आगे बढ़ना होता है।
- push is correct because, in this context, it is used as a figurative noun meaning a concerted, organized administrative or political effort to achieve a goal (like standardizing the highway system). Propulsion is a fantastic "near-miss." It literally means the action of driving or pushing something forward, but it is strictly used for physical or mechanical force (like the propulsion of a rocket engine). It cannot be used to describe an abstract government policy effort. Thrust as a noun means a sudden physical lunge or the main point of an argument. Surge refers to a sudden, powerful forward movement of a physical force (water) or a crowd, lacking the meaning of a planned policy effort.



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