

Unlearnt lessons: On India's inadequate strategic petroleum and gas reserves

India's inadequate strategic petroleum and gas reserves stand exposed

Last week, the Centre **hiked** retail petroleum product prices after a gap of four years. This was expected, since the government had been warning about high crude prices, and how public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) had been **bleeding** heavily due to under-recoveries. It was also expected that this would happen after the results of the five Assembly elections. But the Prime Minister's **appeal** for **austerity** due to the **drain** on foreign exchange, the sharp **depreciation** of the rupee in recent months and the April's **inflation prints point to** a much deeper problem that India could have **addressed decades** earlier — the country's inadequate strategic petroleum and gas reserves. India did **build out** a **strategic** petroleum reserve (SPR) of about 36.7 million-39 million barrels, a programme **conceived following** the post-1991 **vulnerability** and **formalised** in the early 2000s. But today, this covers about seven days of consumption demand at 5.5 million barrels per day (mbpd). Combined with inventories of OMCs and import cover, this **amounts to** more than 70 days of stock. But over the years, India has emerged as the world's third-largest automobile market after the U.S. and China, and a comparison with those nations reveals the scale of India's vulnerability.

While the U.S. built its SPRs **in the aftermath of** the 1973 oil shock — which, at 714 million barrels, is 18 times larger than India's — China's roughly 900 million barrels is even larger. The U.S. has about 400 million barrels currently in its reserve system, providing it with roughly 20 days of consumption. The country has emerged as the world's largest oil producer in the past 10 years with an output of about 13 mbpd and a commercial system wide inventory, pushing it above the 90 day-mark recommended by the International Energy Agency for reserves. The same applies to China, which is comparable with India as a more oil import-dependent nation. These numbers become even **starker** when compared with reserves for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG), where India is most **exposed**. India has about 1.4 lakh tonnes of LPG storage, while its daily consumption is about 80,000 tonnes — more than half its reserve capacity. As for LNG, India largely **relies on** stocks at regasification facilities of Petronet LNG and BPCL, without any underground storage for a fuel **vital** to produce fertilizers. Both the U.S. and China have heavily invested in underground LNG storage. The EU was quick to **adapt** following the Russia-Ukraine war as it **drew down** its dependence on Russian gas. These reserves have enabled advanced **economies** to **hedge** against supply disruptions by relying on long-term contracts at times of supply disruptions, **cushioning** them from spot market spikes. As for China, its **defiance** of American **sanctions** against Russian oil **has paid off handsomely**. India would have benefited too, had it maintained greater strategic **autonomy**.

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

[Practice Exercise]

Vocabulary

1. **Hike** (verb) - increase, raise, escalate, elevate, boost बढ़ाना
2. **Bleed** (verb) - lose, drain, hemorrhaging, depleting, exhausting भारी नुकसान होना
3. **Austerity** (noun) - economy, frugality, thrift, severity, abstinence तपस्या या किफायत
4. **Drain** (noun) - depletion, outflow, consumption, reduction, exhaustion बर्बादी या क्षय
5. **Depreciation** (noun) - devaluation, decline, fall, slump, depreciation मूल्यहास
6. **Point to** (phrasal verb) - to indicate, suggest, or draw attention to something की ओर इशारा करना
7. **Address** (verb) - tackle, handle, confront, attend to, resolve सुलझाना या ध्यान देना
8. **Decade** (noun) - ten-year period दशक
9. **Build out** (phrasal verb) - to expand, develop, or create a larger infrastructure or system व्यापक स्तर पर निर्माण करना
10. **Strategic** (adjective) - tactical, calculated, deliberate, planned, critical रणनीतिक
11. **Conceive** (verb) - design, devise, formulate, originate, imagine परिकल्पना करना
12. **Following** (preposition) - after, subsequent to के बाद
13. **Vulnerability** (noun) - susceptibility, defenselessness, exposure, weakness, helplessness संवेदनशीलता
14. **Formalise** (verb) - validate, institutionalize, legalize, authorize, ratify औपचारिक रूप देना
15. **Amount to** (phrasal verb) - to add up to, equal, or be equivalent to total के बराबर होना
16. **In the aftermath of** (phrase) - as a consequence or result of a significant and usually unpleasant event के परिणामस्वरूप
17. **Starker** (adjective) - sharper, clearer, more distinct, harsher, more conspicuous अधिक स्पष्ट या कठोर
18. **Exposed** (adjective) - vulnerable, unprotected, defenseless, open, susceptible असुरक्षित या अनावृत
19. **Rely on** (phrasal verb) - to depend on or trust someone or something with confidence निर्भर होना
20. **Vital** (adjective) - crucial, essential, critical, key, indispensable अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण
21. **Adapt** (verb) - adjust, accommodate, acclimatize, conform, attune अनुकूल बनना
22. **Draw down** (phrasal verb) - to reduce the level or amount of a supply, resource, or dependence on something कम करना
23. **Economy** (noun) - the system through which a country produces, distributes, and uses goods and services अर्थव्यवस्था
24. **Hedge** (verb) - safeguard, protect, shield, insure, fortify बचाव करना
25. **Cushion** (verb) - soften, protect, shield, mitigate, absorb झटके से बचाना

26. **Defiance** (noun) - resistance, disobedience, rebellion, non-compliance, opposition
अवज्ञा या चुनौती
27. **Sanction** (noun) - penalty, embargo, restriction, ban, boycott प्रतिबंध
28. **Pay off** (phrasal verb) - to yield good results or succeed after a period of effort or risk सफल होना या लाभ देना
29. **Handsomely** (adverb) - generously, substantially, significantly, abundantly, profusely बड़े पैमाने पर
30. **Autonomy** (noun) - the freedom or power to make your own decisions and govern yourself स्वायत्तता

Summary of the Editorial

1. The editorial highlights India's weak strategic petroleum and gas reserves, which have become a major concern during rising global crude oil prices.
2. The Centre recently increased retail fuel prices after four years because public sector oil companies were suffering heavy losses due to under-recoveries.
3. The government had delayed the fuel price hike until after the Assembly elections despite mounting economic pressure.
4. The Prime Minister's appeal for austerity, the falling rupee, and rising inflation reveal deeper structural weaknesses in India's energy security.
5. India had started building Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) after the 1991 economic crisis, and the plan was formalized in the early 2000s.
6. India's SPR capacity is around 36.7–39 million barrels, which is enough for only about seven days of oil consumption.
7. When combined with oil company inventories and imports, India has stock coverage for around 70 days, but this is still inadequate for a large economy.
8. India has become the world's third-largest automobile market after the U.S. and China, increasing its dependence on imported oil.
9. The United States built massive reserves after the 1973 oil crisis and currently maintains far larger reserves and inventories than India.
10. China also has extremely large petroleum reserves, almost 900 million barrels, showing how seriously it treats energy security.
11. India's vulnerability is even greater in LPG storage, as its reserve capacity is only slightly higher than its daily consumption needs.
12. In the case of LNG, India lacks underground storage facilities and mainly depends on stocks at regasification terminals.
13. LNG is especially important because it is essential for fertilizer production and industrial needs.
14. Advanced economies like the U.S., China, and European nations have invested heavily in energy storage systems to protect themselves from supply disruptions and sudden price shocks.
15. The editorial concludes that India could have benefited more from global geopolitical changes, such as discounted Russian oil, if it had maintained stronger strategic autonomy and larger reserves.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What is the central argument presented by the author in the passage regarding India's energy sector?** [Editorial page]
 - A. India must completely overhaul its domestic pricing mechanisms for retail petroleum products to protect public oil marketing companies from structural losses.
 - B. India's strategic fuel reserve infrastructure remains critically deficient compared to major global economies, amplifying its vulnerability to global shocks.
 - C. India should expand its automobile market size to successfully emulate the economic resilience and commercial system models of China and the US.
 - D. India needs to prioritize diplomatic alignments over strategic autonomy to secure stable, long-term bilateral contracts with major global energy producers.
2. **Based on the passage, how does India's situation regarding LPG and LNG compare to its strategic petroleum reserves (SPR)?**
 - A. India possesses a much more advanced underground infrastructure network for natural gas storage than it does for crude oil and retail petroleum commodities.
 - B. India has successfully achieved self-reliance in gas storage facilities by utilizing the commercial regasification plants of private OMCs.
 - C. India's gas reserve infrastructure exhibits a greater degree of vulnerability and exposure to immediate supply disruptions than its strategic oil storage.
 - D. India's daily consumption of natural gas is significantly lower than its total storage capacity, providing a much larger buffer than its oil reserves.
3. **According to the passage, what has prevented India from fully capitalizing on cheaper energy resources during recent geopolitical conflicts?**
 - A. A lack of domestic automobile demand which prevented public sector oil marketing companies from generating sufficient revenue to purchase cheap crude oil.
 - B. A decision by the government to prioritize regional assembly elections over the immediate expansion of domestic underground natural gas storage facilities.
 - C. A failure to maintain a higher degree of strategic autonomy which would have enabled the nation to benefit more effectively from shifting global dynamics.
 - D. A structural shift toward relying on short-term spot market contracts rather than developing long-term partnerships with commercial entities.
4. **Which of the following can be inferred from the passage regarding the strategic reserves of advanced economies like the US and China?**
 - A. They allow these countries to manipulate global spot market prices by artificially controlling their domestic production and system-wide inventory levels.
 - B. They were built primarily to help these nations bypass international environmental regulations and expand their heavy industrial manufacturing capacities.
 - C. They are maintained at maximum capacity through the aggressive exploitation of domestic oilfields rather than international trade agreements.
 - D. They provide a vital financial and supply cushion that shields their domestic economies from sudden volatility and spikes in the international spot market.
5. **In the sentence "India largely relies on stocks at regasification facilities," the word "facilities" is:**
 - A. Noun

- B. Verb
C. Adverb
D. Pronoun
6. **Select the most appropriate SYNONYM of the word “Entrenched.”**
A. Decadential
B. Deep-seated
C. Disoriented
D. Delusionary
7. **Which of the following options is the most suitable conversion of the following sentence into active voice?**
Which type of books are read by you?
A. Which type of books did you read?
B. Which type of books do you read?
C. Which type of books are you read?
D. Which type of books have you read?
8. **What is the correct meaning of the idiom “Hornet’s nest”?**
A. Peaceful place
B. Source of trouble
C. Happy situation
D. Safe area
9. **Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words.**
One who cannot be corrected.
A. Incurable
B. Incurable
C. Hardened
D. Invulnerable
10. **Directions: In the following question, the first and the last sentences of the passage are numbered S1 and S6. The rest of the passage is split into four parts and named P, Q, R, and S. These four parts are not given in their proper order. Read the sentences and find out which of the four combinations gives the logically correct order.**
S1: A newly analyzed Greenland ice core has revealed an unprecedented 12,000-year record of atmospheric mercury deposits.
P: Specifically, the data showed that levels first started rising significantly during the Bronze Age due to early mining activities in Eurasia.
Q: From analyzing this long-term record, scientists found that human impact on these deposits began much earlier than previously believed.
R: Following this early spike, the accumulation further intensified in the 13th century and eventually exploded in the industrial era.
S: These chronological findings strongly suggest that our species has actually disrupted the global mercury cycle for over two millennia.
S6: Therefore, researchers conclude that current environmental models are fundamentally wrong to focus solely on the last five centuries.
A. P R S Q
B. Q P R S

- C. R S Q P
D. S Q P R
11. **Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the word "Stark."**
A. Ambiguous
B. Capricious
C. Dilatory
D. Effulgent
12. **Identify the correct spelling of the misspelled word.**
A. assets
B. assests
C. assetts
D. asests
13. **Direction: Identify the segment that contains a grammatical error.**
The old man (A)/ died for(B) / a heart attack(C)/today(D).
A. died for(B)
B. The old man (A)
C. a heart attack(C)
D. today(D)
14. **Select the option that expresses the given sentence in direct voice.**
The scientist told the students that light travels faster than sound.
A. The scientist told the students, "Light travelled faster than sound."
B. The scientist said to the students, "Light travels faster than sound."
C. The scientist said, "Light is traveling faster than sound."
D. The scientist said, "Light will travel faster than sound."
15. **Choose the most appropriate word to fill in the blank.**
The citizens celebrated in the streets when the oppressive _____ was finally overthrown, hoping for a more democratic and peaceful future.
A. Rancor
B. Repartee
C. Regime
D. Respite
16. **Read the following sentences to find whether there is any error in any part :**
It is appearing to me that you are trying to destabilise the present committee.
A. It is appearing to me
B. that you are
C. trying to destabilise
D. the present committee
17. **Select the most appropriate SYNONYM of the word "Onset."**
A. Inception
B. Quagmire
C. Hegemony
D. Maelstrom
18. **Which of the following pairs of homonyms can be used to fill in the blanks most suitably?**

The negotiator managed to ___ the tension in the room before it could ___ into a full-blown conflict.

- A. diffuse, defuse
- B. alleviate, elevate
- C. elevate, alleviate
- D. defuse, diffuse

19. **Improve the following sentence by replacing the underlined words with the correct phrasal verb.**

After months of training, she was ready to go through the final exam.

- A. go in for
- B. go off
- C. went through
- D. go along

20. **Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the word "Replicate."**

- A. Originate
- B. Lampoon
- C. Exhume
- D. Concur

Comprehension

On my 70th birthday, I woke up earlier than usual. The house was quiet. I made myself a cup of tea and sat by the window feeling a calm I had not noticed in years. At this stage of life, such moments start to matter.

In the (1) ___ days of youth, life felt as if it was something to be chased. There was always the next step — studies, work, family and responsibilities. You kept moving because everyone around you was doing so. There was little time to figure out whether this meant going in the direction you wanted to go. With time, the truth became clear: life is not meant to be rushed! Life teaches you that not everything (2) ___ your attention. Earlier, every opinion mattered, every expectation felt urgent. Now, you learn to (3) ___. You listen, without clinging to everything.

The second realisation comes from relationships. For years, I believed that love and respect were enough, but life teaches you otherwise. Relationships need patience and space, the (4) ___ to overlook small faults. You realise that people change. So do you. Every relationship will not remain the same, distances matter, silences grow without reason. And slowly, you learn to accept this. Letting go does not mean you care less, just that you understand more.

Then comes a personal reflection. For most of my life, I was busy being what others needed me to be, a parent, a partner, a provider, a friend. These roles are important, but somewhere along the way, you tend to lose touch with yourself. Now I can be myself and this is possible in various ways: a walk taken alone, a hobby picked up again or time spent without purpose. In these small moments, you start becoming yourself again, not in a (5) ___, but as a person.

21. **What should come in the place of blank number (1)?**

- A. dark
- B. rough
- C. halcyon
- D. bitter

22. **What should come in the place of blank number (2)?**
- A. wants
 - B. deserves
 - C. asked
 - D. take
23. **What should come in the place of blank number (3)?**
- A. step up
 - B. step in
 - C. step over
 - D. step back
24. **What should come in the place of blank number (4)?**
- A. refusal
 - B. fear
 - C. willingness
 - D. anger
25. **What should come in the place of blank number (5)?**
- A. game
 - B. job
 - C. role
 - D. task

Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

1. B) **India's strategic fuel reserve infrastructure remains critically deficient compared to major global economies, amplifying its vulnerability to global shocks.**

The passage focuses on India's deep problem: "the country's inadequate strategic petroleum and gas reserves" and states that a comparison with the US and China "reveals the scale of India's vulnerability." The core message is that India's storage infrastructure is dangerously inadequate compared to global peers.

Option A is Incorrect: The passage mentions retail price hikes and OMC losses as minor, expected events, but explicitly transitions away from them to introduce a "much deeper problem."

Option C is Incorrect: The large automobile market is cited as a reason why India is so vulnerable to energy crises, not as an economic goal or a solution to mimic.

Option D is Incorrect: The author advocates for greater strategic autonomy and independent choice, which contradicts the idea of prioritizing external diplomatic alignments.

2. C) **India's gas reserve infrastructure exhibits a greater degree of vulnerability and exposure to immediate supply disruptions than its strategic oil storage.**

"These numbers become even starker when compared with reserves for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG), where India is most exposed." The author uses the terms "even starker" and "most exposed" to directly declare that India's gas storage situation is more critical, vulnerable, and exposed than its oil reserves.

Option A: The passage explicitly states that India has "without any underground storage" for LNG, meaning its gas storage infrastructure is structurally non-existent and less advanced than its oil reserves.

Option B: Relying purely on these industrial facilities in the absence of national strategic underground reserves is criticized as a major structural weakness, not celebrated as a milestone of self-reliance.

Option D: Because a single day's consumption eats up more than half of India's total storage capacity, the buffer is extremely narrow and precarious, not large.

3. C) **A failure to maintain a higher degree of strategic autonomy which would have enabled the nation to benefit more effectively from shifting global dynamics.**

"As for China, its defiance of American sanctions against Russian oil has paid off handsomely. India would have benefited too, had it maintained greater strategic autonomy." The passage explicitly blames India's inability to fully capitalize on discounted fuel options during recent conflicts on its failure to preserve a higher level of independent geopolitics.

Option A: The passage clearly indicates that India's domestic automobile demand is immense and growing. High consumption increases vulnerability to energy shocks, completely contradicting the premise of a "lack of demand."

Option B: The passage mentions the assembly elections solely as the reason for the timing delay behind the domestic consumer price hikes. It never states that these elections stopped or delayed national gas infrastructure projects.

Option D: Forced reliance on volatile short-term spot markets is described as a painful penalty that nations suffer when they lack large reserves. It is a negative consequence of low storage, not a deliberate structural policy choice.

4. D) **They provide a vital financial and supply cushion that shields their domestic economies from sudden volatility and spikes in the international spot market.**

"These reserves have enabled advanced economies to hedge against supply disruptions by relying on long-term contracts at times of supply disruptions, cushioning them from spot market spikes." The passage directly states that having massive storage systems functions as a critical protective buffer ("cushioning them") that shields these economies from sudden international price spikes and supply volatility.

Option A: The passage clearly indicates that these reserves are used defensively to "hedge" and protect domestic markets from global supply shocks, not offensively to manipulate or control global spot market prices.

Option B: The passage establishes that these reserves were built as direct defense responses to historical energy shocks and geopolitical crises, rather than as a mechanism to bypass international environmental laws.

Option C: The passage explicitly notes that China is highly dependent on imports, proving that a country can maintain massive strategic inventories through international trade rather than relying on the aggressive exploitation of domestic oilfields.

5. A) **Noun**

In the sentence provided, "facilities" is the object of the preposition "at." In English grammar, the object of a preposition must be a noun or a pronoun. The word is part of the noun phrase "regasification facilities." Here, "regasification" acts as a noun adjunct (a noun used as an adjective) to describe the type of "facilities."

6. B) **Entrenched** (adjective) – Ingrained, deep-seated, fixed, rooted, established. (जड़ जमाया हुआ या गहरा)

Synonym: **Deep-seated** (adjective) – Firmly established at a deep or profound level; difficult to change. (गहरा / दृढ़)

- **Decadential** (adjective): Characterized by or reflecting a state of moral or cultural decline. (पतनशील)
- **Disoriented** (adjective): Having lost one's sense of direction; feeling confused. (भ्रमित)
- **Delusionary** (adjective): Based on or having the nature of a false belief or delusion. (भ्रामक)

7. B) **Which type of books do you read?**

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 tense वही रखा जाता है। दिए गए वाक्य में "Which type of books" Passive Subject है, "are read" Verb (Simple Present Passive) है और "by you" agent है। Active में बदलने पर "you" Subject बन गया है, Verb को "do read" (Simple Present Interrogative) में बदला

गया है और "which type of books" Object के रूप में प्रयोग हुआ है। इसलिए सही वाक्य होगा — "Which type of books do you read?"

- To change a sentence from Passive to Active Voice, the agent becomes the subject and the passive subject becomes the object, while maintaining the same tense and interrogative structure. Here, "Which type of books" (Passive Subject), "are read" (Simple Present Passive), and "by you" (agent) are transformed into "you" (Subject), "do read" (Active Verb in Simple Present Interrogative), and "which type of books" (Object). Therefore, the correct sentence is — "Which type of books do you read?"

8. B) "**Hornet's nest**" means Source of trouble झगड़े का कारण.

9. B) **Incorrigible** (adjective) – a person who cannot be corrected or reformed. असुधार्य

- **Incurable** (adjective) – a disease or condition that cannot be cured. असाध्य
- **Hardened** (adjective) – someone who has become stubborn or unfeeling. कठोर
- **Invulnerable** (adjective) – impossible to harm or damage. अभेद्य

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

Sentence Q, पैराग्राफ की शुरुआत (S1 के तुरंत बाद) में आएगा क्योंकि इसमें मौजूद "this long-term record" शब्द सीधे तौर पर S1 में दिए गए '12,000-year record' की ओर इशारा करते हैं। यह "factual ground" तैयार करता है कि इंसानी प्रभाव वैज्ञानिकों की पिछली सोच से काफी पहले शुरू हो गया था।

Sentence P, Sentence Q के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह Q में किए गए "earlier than previously believed" (पहले शुरू होने) के दावे का सटीक समय (Bronze Age) बताकर एक अनिवार्य लिंक बनाता है।

Sentence R, Sentence P के बाद आएगा क्योंकि इसमें मौजूद "this early spike" शब्द सीधे तौर पर P में दिए गए 'Bronze Age' की वृद्धि की ओर इशारा करते हैं। यह चर्चा को कालक्रम में आगे (13th century और industrial era) ले जाता है।

Sentence S, Sentence R के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह पूरे scenario को एक "conclusion" (S6 से पहले) की ओर ले जाता है। इसमें "These chronological findings" का जिक्र है जो सीधे तौर पर P और R में बताए गए पूरे इतिहास से जुड़ता है, जो S6 (जिसमें current models के गलत होने की बात है) के तार्किक प्रवाह को पूरा करता है।

- Sentence Q comes at the beginning (after S1) because the phrase "this long-term record" creates a mandatory link pointing directly back to the '12,000-year record' mentioned in S1. It establishes the factual ground that human impact began earlier than previously thought.
- Sentence P follows Q because it provides the specific timeline (the Bronze Age) to support the claim made in Q about the impact starting "earlier than previously believed," creating a mandatory link.
- Sentence R follows P as it uses the phrase "this early spike" to create a mandatory link pointing directly to the rise during the Bronze Age mentioned in P. It transitions the topic forward in time to the 13th century and the industrial era.
- Sentence S follows R as the conclusion (leading into S6). It uses the phrase "These chronological findings" to refer directly back to the historical timeline outlined in P and R, providing the deduction (two millennia of disruption) which seamlessly bridges into the point about flawed current models made in S6.

11. A) **Stark** (adjective) – sharp, distinct, obvious, clear, grim. (स्पष्ट या कठोर)

Antonym: Ambiguous (adjective) – Open to more than one interpretation; not having a clear meaning. (अस्पष्ट)

- **Capricious** (adjective): Given to sudden and unaccountable changes of mood or behavior; fickle. (मनमौजी)
- **Dilatory** (adjective): Slow to act; intended to cause delay; characterized by procrastination. (विलंबकारी)
- **Effulgent** (adjective): Shining brightly; radiant; emanating a brilliant or shining quality. (तेजस्वी या चमकदार)

12. A) **assets** – The correct spelling is assets, which refers to valuable resources or property owned by a person or organization.

अर्थ (Hindi): संपत्ति, परिसंपत्तियाँ

13. A) ' **died for**(B)

'died for' के बदले 'died of' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि बीमारी या प्राकृतिक कारण से मृत्यु होने पर 'die of' का प्रयोग किया जाता है, जबकि 'die for' का प्रयोग किसी उद्देश्य या कारण के लिए बलिदान के अर्थ में होता है।

"Die of" is used when death is caused by:

an illness

a disease

a natural cause

A heart attack is a medical cause, so "of" is required.

Correct Sentence: The old man died of a heart attack today.

14. B) **The scientist said to the students, "Light travels faster than sound."**

Active से Passive Voice की तरह Indirect से Direct Speech में बदलते समय Reporting Verb, Tense और Statement Structure को मूल Direct रूप में बदला जाता है। दिए गए वाक्य में "The scientist told the students" Reporting Verb है और "that light travels faster than sound" Reported Clause है। यह एक universal truth है, इसलिए Direct Speech में भी Tense Simple Present ही रहता है। "told the students" Direct में सामान्यतः said to the students बनता है और वाक्य को उद्धरण चिन्हों में लिखा जाता है।

- To change a sentence from Indirect to Direct Speech, the reporting verb is converted to its direct form and the reported clause is placed inside quotation marks. Since the clause states a universal truth, its tense remains Simple Present. Here, "told the students" becomes "said to the students," and the statement is written exactly in quoted form.

15. C) **Regime** (noun) – A government, especially an authoritarian one; a system or planned way of doing things. (शासन / व्यवस्था)

The sentence talks about an oppressive authority being overthrown, which perfectly fits regime.

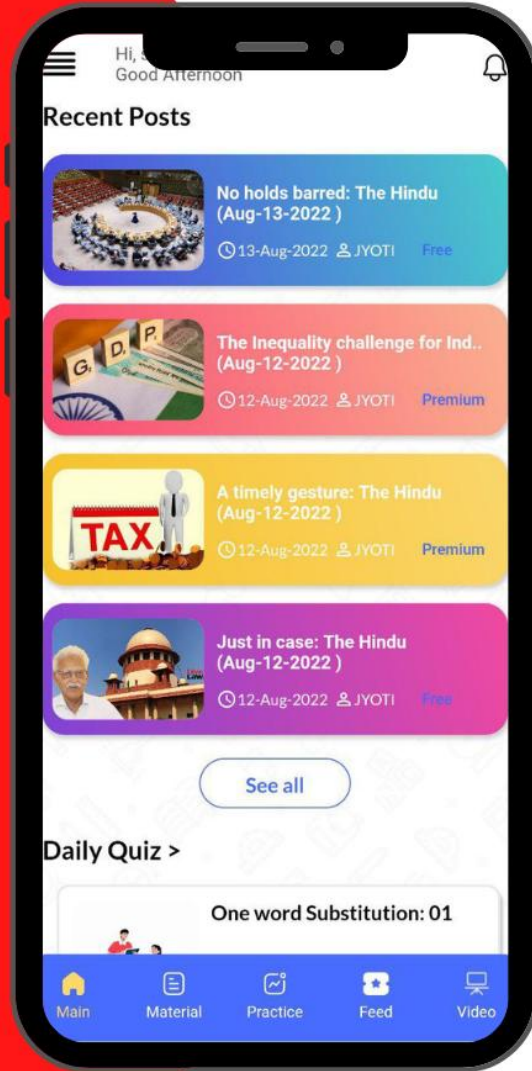
- **Rancour** (noun): Bitterness or resentfulness, especially when long-standing. (विद्वेष)
- **Repartee** (noun): Conversation or speech characterized by quick, witty comments or replies. (हाज़िरजवाबी)

- **Respite** (noun): A short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant. (विराम)
16. A) "is appearing" के बदले "appears" का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि यह opinion/mental perception दर्शाता है और ऐसे मामलों में Simple Present Tense प्रयोग होता है।
"appears" will be used instead of "is appearing" because it expresses a mental perception/opinion, and such meanings take Simple Present Tense.
17. A) **Onset** (noun) - beginning, start, commencement, inception, arrival (शुरुआत/आरंभ)
Synonym: **Inception** (noun) – The establishment or starting point of an institution or activity. (आरंभ / शुरुआत)
- **Quagmire** (noun): An awkward, complex, or hazardous situation. (कठिन परिस्थिति)
 - **Hegemony** (noun): Leadership or dominance, especially by one state or group over others. (आधिपत्य)
 - **Maelstrom** (noun): A powerful whirlpool in the sea; a situation of confused movement or violent turmoil. (खलबली)
18. D) **defuse, diffuse** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि पूरे संदर्भ में पहला blank तनाव को शांत/कम करने की क्रिया दर्शा रहा है, जबकि दूसरा blank तनाव के फैलने/फैलाव की स्थिति को दर्शा रहा है। यहाँ "managed to ___ the tension" में defuse का अर्थ है तनाव को शांत करना, और "before it could ___ into a full-blown conflict" में diffuse का अर्थ है फैल जाना। इसलिए यह जोड़ी सबसे उपयुक्त है।
- **'Defuse'** should be used in the first blank because it means to reduce tension or make a situation less dangerous. In the second blank, 'Diffuse' fits because it means to spread or scatter. The sentence indicates that the negotiator calmed the tension before it could spread into a larger conflict. Thus, defuse, diffuse is the most appropriate choice.
19. A) 'go through' के स्थान पर '**go in for**' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि exam के साथ सही phrasal verb 'go in for' होता है, जिसका अर्थ होता है किसी परीक्षा में बैठना / appear होना। 'go through' का अर्थ सहना या विस्तार से जाँचना होता है, जो यहाँ उपयुक्त नहीं है।
In English
"Go in for" is a fixed phrasal verb meaning to appear for / to take part in (especially exams or competitions).
The context clearly refers to appearing in the final exam, not merely experiencing it.
Correct Sentence: After months of training, she was ready to go in for the final exam.
Other Options Analysis:
- **go off** — means explode or stop working.
 - **went through** — wrong tense and wrong meaning.
 - **go along** — means agree or accompany.
20. A) **Replicate** (verb) – duplicate, copy, parrot, mimic, reproduce. (दोहराना/नकल करना)
Antonym: **Originate** (verb) – To have a specified beginning; to create or initiate for the first time. (उत्पन्न करना)
- **Lampoon** (verb): To publicly criticize someone or something by using ridicule, irony, or sarcasm. (मज़ाक उड़ाना)
 - **Exhume** (verb): To dig out something from the ground (especially a corpse) that has been buried. (खोद कर निकालना)

- **Concur** (verb): To be of the same opinion; to agree with a decision or a statement made by others. (सहमत होना)
21. C) **halcyon** (शांतिपूर्ण और खुशहाल) सही है। अंग्रेज़ी के आम उपयोग (standard usage) में, जब हम जवानी के उन सुनहरे, खुशहाल और ऊर्जावान दिनों को याद करते हैं, तो उन्हें "halcyon days" कहा जाता है। dark (अंधेरा / बुरा), rough (कठिन), और bitter (कड़वा) बहुत ही आसान और नकारात्मक (negative) शब्द हैं, जबकि लेखक जवानी के दिनों को एक अच्छे और जीवंत समय के रूप में याद कर रहा है।
- The correct answer is "halcyon" because in standard English usage, "halcyon days" is a common collocation used to describe a very happy, peaceful, and idyllic time in the past, often referring to youth. "Dark", "rough", and "bitter" are easy negative words that contradict the nostalgic and generally positive tone the author uses to describe their younger years.
22. B) **deserves** (हकदार होना / लायक होना) सही है। वाक्य का अर्थ यह है कि जीवन में हर चीज़ इस लायक नहीं होती कि आप उस पर अपना ध्यान (attention) दें। (grammar) के नियमों के अनुसार, "everything" एक singular subject है, इसलिए इसके साथ 'take' (जो कि plural verb है) सीधे गलत हो जाता है। wants (चाहता है) और asked (मांगा) इंसानों के लिए ज़्यादा सही होते हैं, निर्जीव 'हर चीज़' (everything) के लिए नहीं।
- The correct answer is "deserves" because the context discusses realizing that not every situation or opinion is worthy of your attention. According to grammar rules, "everything" is a singular subject, so the plural verb "take" is grammatically incorrect. "Wants" and "asked" generally apply to conscious beings, not abstract concepts like "everything".
23. D) **step back** (पीछे हटना / दूर से स्थिति को देखना) सही है। वाक्य के संदर्भ (context) के अनुसार, उम्र के साथ इंसान हर बात पर प्रतिक्रिया देने के बजाय पीछे हटकर (step back) शांत रहना सीख जाता है। step up (आगे आना / ज़िम्मेदारी लेना) और step in (बीच-बचाव करना या दखल देना) इसके बिल्कुल उल्टे हैं क्योंकि यहाँ इंसान दखलंदाज़ी कम कर रहा है। step over (ऊपर से लांघना) का यहाँ वाक्य की बनावट में कोई अर्थ नहीं बनता।
- The correct answer is "step back" because it means to withdraw from a situation to think calmly, which perfectly matches the context of no longer reacting to every expectation. "Step up" (to take responsibility) and "step in" (to intervene) mean becoming more involved, which is the exact opposite of what the author is doing. "Step over" means to physically cross over something, making no sense here.
24. C) **willingness** (इच्छा / रज़ामंदी) सही है। रिश्तों को चलाने के लिए छोटी-छोटी गलतियों को माफ़ करने की अपनी अंदरूनी इच्छा या रज़ामंदी होनी चाहिए। refusal (मनाही) और anger (गुस्सा) बहुत आसान लेकिन नकारात्मक (negative) शब्द हैं, जो रिश्तों को सुधारने के बजाय बिगाड़ देंगे। fear (डर) से गलतियों को माफ़ नहीं किया जाता, बल्कि समझदारी और रज़ामंदी (willingness) से किया जाता है।
- The correct answer is "willingness" because it describes the positive readiness or choice to ignore small faults in order to maintain a relationship. "Refusal" and "anger" are negative nouns that would destroy a relationship rather than nurture it. "Fear" implies ignoring faults out of being scared, which contradicts the wise, patient tone of the passage.

25. C) **role** (भूमिका / किरदार) सही है। पैसेज के पिछले वाक्यों में माता-पिता, जीवनसाथी या दोस्त जैसे सामाजिक 'roles' की स्पष्ट रूप से बात की गई है। लेखक कह रहा है कि अब वह किसी किरदार (role) में नहीं, बल्कि एक इंसान (person) के रूप में खुद को पा रहा है। game (खेल) और job (नौकरी) बहुत ही आसान और संदर्भ से भटके हुए शब्द हैं। task (काम) का मतलब कोई छोटा-मोटा काम होता है, जो पूरी ज़िंदगी की पहचान पर लागू नहीं होता।

- The correct answer is "role" because the passage earlier explicitly lists being a parent, partner, provider, or friend as "roles". The author is now stepping out of these defined functions to just be a person. "Game" and "job" are overly simplistic words that do not capture the emotional depth of family and societal expectations. "Task" refers to a specific piece of work, not a lifelong identity.



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