

Strategic stalemate: On the U.S.-Iran conflict

The U.S. should **lift** the **blockade** before asking Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz

President Donald Trump's decision to **back off** from **striking** Iran, just hours after **threatening** to **seize** the country's Kharg Island, **underscores** the **dilemma** he faces in **dealing with** Tehran. **Mr. Trump**, who launched the conflict with his **ally** Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel on February 28, now **wants** to end it through talks. But **Iran**, which survived 40 days of U.S.-Israeli bombing and now controls the Strait of Hormuz, **appears** unwilling to hand him a **diplomatic** victory. Caught between an uncontrollable Israel, whose bombing of Lebanon threatens the **fragile** U.S.-Iran **ceasefire**, and an **emboldened** Iran that has become increasingly **defiant** and **intransigent**, Mr. Trump **reverted to** his familiar **playbook** of using military pressure to alter Tehran's **negotiating** position. On Wednesday he ordered **strikes** on Iran after confirming that a U.S. Apache helicopter had been **shot down** over the Strait of Hormuz. Iran **retaliated** by striking U.S. bases in Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan. After two nights of **tit-for-tat strikes**, Mr. Trump backed off on Thursday, claiming progress in talks. Over the past two months, he has claimed dozens of times that a deal with Iran was within reach. In the war's **escalation** cycle, Mr. Trump takes one step forward, two steps back.

When Mr. Trump **despatched** his "armada" to Iran's **shores** in February, he wanted to force Tehran into **submission** through military pressure. The U.S. and Israel had an ambitious list of demands, including **dismantling** Iran's nuclear programme, **degrading** its missile capabilities and ending its support for **non-state militias**. When the U.S. and Israel launched the war, they wanted **regime** change in Tehran. More than three months later, the **war**, which failed to achieve any of its declared objectives, **has hardened** Iran's positions. If Iran was willing to **make concessions on** its nuclear programme on February 27, it now **insists that any discussion on** the nuclear file can **take place** only after the U.S.-Israeli hostilities cease and the **blockade** is lifted. The war has fundamentally **altered** the strategic reality of the region. Yes, Iran has absorbed significant military and economic costs, but it has emerged strategically stronger by taking control of the Hormuz Strait and effectively **trapping** the U.S. in a costly stalemate. Rather than chasing a **delusional** Iranian surrender, Washington should adopt a phased, realistic diplomatic approach. The priority should be to **enforce** and extend the ceasefire **in good faith** and lift the blockade in exchange for Iran reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Once stability is restored, both sides can return to **substantive** talks on Iran's nuclear programme and work towards a **durable** end to the conflict. **[Practice Exercise]**

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

Vocabulary

1. **Strategic** (adjective) - tactical, calculated, planned, deliberate, methodical. रणनीतिक
2. **Stalemate** (noun) - deadlock, impasse, standoff, draw, standstill. गतिरोध
3. **Lift** (verb) - remove, end, cancel, abolish, revoke. हटाना (प्रतिबंध आदि)
4. **Blockade** (noun) - siege, barrier, blockade, obstruction, encirclement. नाकेबंदी
5. **Back off** (phrasal verb) - retreat, withdraw, pull back, yield, recede. पीछे हटना
6. **Strike** (verb) - attack, hit, assault, bombard, raid. हमला करना
7. **Threaten** (verb) - warn, intimidate, menace, browbeat, scare. धमकाना
8. **Seize** (verb) - capture, take, grab, confiscate, annex. कब्जा करना
9. **Underscore** (verb) - highlight, emphasize, underline, stress, accent. रेखांकित करना (महत्व दर्शाना)
10. **Dilemma** (noun) - predicament, quandary, plight, difficulty, puzzle. दुविधा
11. **Deal with** (phrasal verb) - handle, manage, address, tackle, cope with. निपटना
12. **Ally** (noun) - partner, associate, colleague, confederate, supporter. सहयोगी
13. **Diplomatic** (adjective) - political, tactful, negotiated, strategic, ministerial. कूटनीतिक
14. **Fragile** (adjective) - delicate, weak, brittle, frail, vulnerable. नाजुक
15. **Ceasefire** (noun) - temporary agreement to stop fighting between opposing sides, truce युद्धविराम
16. **Emboldened** (adjective) - encouraged, heartened, strengthened, empowered, confident. प्रोत्साहित
17. **Defiant** (adjective) - rebellious, resistant, insubordinate, challenging, uncooperative. अवज्ञाकारी
18. **Intransigent** (adjective) - stubborn, uncompromising, unyielding, rigid, inflexible. अडियल
19. **Revert to** (phrasal verb) - to return to or go back to वापस उसी स्थिति में जाना
20. **Playbook** (noun) - strategy, plan, scheme, method, approach. कार्ययोजना (रणनीति)
21. **Negotiating** (adjective) - bargaining, discussing, deliberating, mediating. बातचीत करने संबंधी
22. **Shoot down** (phrasal verb) - to cause an aircraft to fall by firing at it. मार गिराना
23. **Retaliate** (verb) - hit back, counterattack, revenge, reciprocate, avenge. बदला लेना (जवाबी कार्रवाई करना)
24. **Tit-for-tat strikes** (noun) - retaliatory attacks where each side hits the other equally. ईंट का जवाब पत्थर से देना
25. **Escalation** (noun) - increase, intensification, growth, rise, surge. वृद्धि (तीव्रता)
26. **Despatch** (verb) - send, dispatch, transmit, ship, forward. भेजना

27. **Armada** (noun) - fleet, navy, squadron, flotilla, task force. नौसैनिक बेड़ा
28. **Shore** (noun) - coast, coastline, beach, seaside, waterfront. तट
29. **Submission** (noun) - surrender, capitulation, compliance, yield, yielding. समर्पण
30. **Dismantle** (verb) - break down, take apart, demolish, scrap, destroy. नष्ट करना (विध्वंस करना)
31. **Degrade** (verb) - weaken, undermine, lower, debase, diminish. कमजोर करना
32. **Non-state militia** (noun) - armed group not part of a government military. गैर-सरकारी सशस्त्र समूह
33. **Regime** (noun) - system or method of government, or a particular set of rules or practices शासन
34. **Harden** (verb) - toughen, solidify, calcify, set, stiffen. कठोर बनाना
35. **Make concessions on** (phrase) - to yield or give in on specific points during negotiations. रियायतें देना
36. **Insist on** (phrasal verb) - to firmly demand or strongly maintain something. जोर देना
37. **Take place** (phrase) - to happen or occur घटित होना
38. **Alter** (verb) - change, modify, adjust, transform, vary. बदलना
39. **Trap** (verb) - confine, corner, snare, entangle, imprison. फंसाना
40. **Delusional** (adjective) - unrealistic, fanciful, irrational, misled, mistaken. भ्रमपूर्ण
41. **Enforce** (verb) - implement, apply, execute, impose, carry out. लागू करना
42. **In good faith** (phrase) - with honest intentions and sincerity, without any intention to deceive नेकनीयती से
43. **Substantive** (adjective) - meaningful, significant, serious, real, considerable. ठोस (महत्वपूर्ण)
44. **Durable** (adjective) - lasting, permanent, sustainable, enduring, long-term. स्थायी

Summary of the Editorial

1. The editorial argues that the **U.S. should lift the blockade on Iran before demanding that Iran reopen the Strait of Hormuz.**
2. President Donald Trump initially threatened military escalation but later stepped back from directly attacking Iran.
3. His reversal highlights the difficult strategic position Washington currently faces in dealing with Iran.
4. The conflict began with U.S. support for Israeli actions under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.
5. After around **40 days of U.S.–Israeli bombing**, Iran remained intact and did not surrender.
6. Iran's control over the **Strait of Hormuz** strengthened its bargaining position.
7. The U.S. became trapped between Israel's aggressive military actions and Iran's increasingly defiant stance.
8. Trump attempted to pressure Iran through military action to improve America's negotiating leverage.
9. Escalation increased after a U.S. Apache helicopter was reportedly shot down, triggering U.S. strikes.
10. Iran responded by launching attacks on U.S. bases in neighboring countries, increasing regional tensions.
11. After brief retaliatory exchanges, Trump shifted back toward diplomacy and claimed progress in negotiations.
12. The original objectives of the U.S. and Israel included limiting Iran's nuclear programme, reducing missile capabilities, weakening allied militias, and even encouraging regime change.
13. According to the editorial, these objectives were **not achieved**, and instead the war hardened Iran's position.
14. Iran now insists that meaningful talks on its nuclear programme can happen only after hostilities stop and the blockade ends.
15. The editorial concludes that the most realistic solution is a **phased diplomatic approach**: extend the ceasefire, lift the blockade, reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and then resume nuclear negotiations for long-term peace.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **Which of the following statements is/are TRUE as mentioned in the above passage?**
 - a) A couple of first-world powers are currently grappling with the strategic consequences of a military standoff that they themselves initiated.
 - b) Due to the high military and economic damages inflicted upon it, Iran has lost its strategic footing in the region and is on the verge of handing a diplomatic victory to the U.S.
 - c) Following the recent military escalation, Iran's stance on its nuclear programme has become more rigid compared to its position just before the conflict began.

A. Both a and b
B. Both b and c
C. Only a
D. Both a and c
2. **Which of the following statements is/are FALSE as mentioned in the above passage?**
 - a. To force Iran into submission, President Trump ordered military strikes on Thursday, claiming that negotiations had collapsed.
 - b. While the U.S. and Israel initially aimed for a transformation of the political leadership in Tehran, the military campaign failed to realize its stated goals.
 - c. The actions of Israel in Lebanon are perceived as a stabilizing factor that helps maintain the durability of the fragile U.S.-Iran ceasefire

A. Only b
B. Both a and c
C. Both a and b
D. both b and c
3. **Which of the following words is a synonym to the word 'intransigent', as used in the above context?**

A. Compliant
B. Unyielding
C. Fleeting
D. Extricating
4. **Which of the following option would correctly describe the initial objective of the U.S. and Israel and its ultimate outcome as per the given passage?**
 - A. The allied forces expected to bring off the complete dismantling of Iran's strategic assets, but instead got bogged down in a costly stalemate.
 - B. The U.S. and Israel wanted to break out the Iranian regime entirely through an armada, succeeding perfectly in making Tehran surrender.
 - C. Leaders expected to clear out the Strait of Hormuz by backing off from the ceasefire on the first day of the conflict.
 - D. All a, b and c
5. **The author has used different tones in the above passage. What are those tones?**
 - a. Critical
 - b. Eulogizing
 - c. Pragmatic

A. Only a
B. Only c

- C. Both a and c
D. Both b and c
6. **Which of the following idiom given in the alternatives has the meaning?**
An offer made without conditions or restrictions, and requires nothing in return.
A. Keep one on a string
B. Loosen the apron strings
C. With no strings attached
D. Loosen the purse strings
7. **From the alternatives given below, select the correct meaning of the idiom.**
The penny drops.
A. Said when someone suddenly comes to realize or understand something
B. Said when someone suddenly comes to feel angry about something
C. Said when someone suddenly comes to bends to pick something
D. Said when someone suddenly comes to feel loved by somebody
8. **Choose the correctly spelt word from the given options.**
A. Conscious
B. Conciuous
C. Consious
D. Contious
9. **Select the option with the correct spelling that can replace the underlined word in the given sentence. If the spelling in the given sentence is already correct, choose Option "No replacement required".**
He remained nonchaliant even when chaos erupted around him, as if nothing could shake his calm.
A. nonchalent
B. nonchalant
C. nonchelant
D. No replacement required
10. **Choose the misspelt word from the given options.**
A. Predictable
B. Valuable
C. Sociable
D. Compatable
11. **Direction: Rearrange the following sentences (P, Q, R, S) between S1 and S6 to form a meaningful, logical, and coherent paragraph based on the passage.**
S1. The World Heritage List originally emerged from a post-World War Two push to protect culturally and environmentally significant places threatened by conflict, industrialisation, and modern development.
P. However, since the list's early days, the explosive rise of social media has increasingly transformed this protective status into a powerful magnet for global tourism.
Q. For instance, residents of the picture-perfect Slovakian village of Vlkolínec argue that the massive crowds drawn by their heritage status have created far more issues than the title is worth.

- R. Because this prestigious UNESCO designation unlocks crucial international conservation funding, it has successfully become one of the world's most influential tools for heritage protection.
- S. This sudden influx of tourists often creates unforeseen problems for the very communities living in these recognized areas, leading to severe local backlash against the designation.
- S6. These emerging disputes highlight a growing global debate about what happens when the vital interests of local communities collide with international efforts to preserve humanity's shared heritage.
- A. P R S Q
B. R P S Q
C. S Q P R
D. R S P Q
12. **Choose the word that is most opposite in meaning to “damaged”.**
- A. Flawless
B. Deteriorated
C. Defaced
D. Broken
13. **Select the correct alternative to fill in the blank with the correct preposition in the following sentence.**
- This song is not befitting _____ the Independence Day Celebration.
- A. for
B. to
C. on
D. by
14. **Choose the most suitable one-word substitution for the following.**
- The one who rides horses professionally.
- A. Rider
B. Groom
C. Farrier
D. Jockey
15. **Choose the most suitable one-word substitution for the following.**
- The art of preserving an animal's body by stuffing or mounting.
- A. Taxidermy
B. Scrimshaw
C. Oshibana
D. Plastination
16. **Choose the correct sentence where the homonym “seal” means a sea animal.**
- A. He put his official seal on the agreement.
B. The lawyer broke the wax seal on the letter.
C. We saw a seal clapping its fins at the zoo.
D. Please seal the envelope properly.
17. **In the given question, a sentence is divided into four parts and given in the alternatives (A), (B), (C), and (D). There is an error in one part. Choose the alternative containing that part of the sentence that has the error. Choosing the alternative with the error will be the answer.**

Between the advantages of being an Indian citizen, freedom to worship one's own god is of utmost importance for the orthodox.

- A. Between the advantages of
- B. being an Indian citizen,
- C. freedom to worship one's own god is
- D. of utmost importance for the orthodox.

18. **Direction: Rearrange the following sentences (1, 2, 3, 4) to form a meaningful, logical, and coherent paragraph based on the passage.**

- A. However, just as the 80-year-old folk veteran was finally settling into retirement due to health problems, he received a massive wave of unexpected late attention when pop superstar Ed Sheeran posted a glowing review of his long-forgotten 1978 LP on Instagram.
- B. Despite achieving such remarkable early milestones, touring the world, and signing major record deals, mainstream commercial success ultimately eluded him throughout his highly respected but quiet career.
- C. In 1966, a twenty-one-year-old Allan Taylor left his secure apprenticeship behind to seek adventure across Europe, surviving by his musical wits and living day to day while sleeping in the back of a van.
- D. During those wandering years of playing for pennies in tiny bars, his fortunes abruptly changed when he received a telegram from Fairport Convention inviting him to support them on the massive stage of the Royal Albert Hall.

- A. 3 1 4 2
- B. 4 2 1 3
- C. 3 4 2 1
- D. 2 1 3 4

19. **There are four underlined words in the sentence given below. One of them is misspelt. Choose the option with the misspelt word.**

Global health experts warned that the next pandemic could emerge from zoonotick diseases transmitted between animals and humans.

- A. experts
- B. zoonotick
- C. pandemic
- D. transmitted

20. **Choose the word that is the antonym of Habitual.**

- A. Regular
- B. Occasional
- C. Customary
- D. Routine

Passage:

Most corporate turnarounds have similar themes. New ownership, an injection of capital, rightsizing, capex, product-revitalisation, and for the successful ones – profitability. Just four years ago, with the transition from being a Public Sector Undertaking to new ownership under the Tata group, Air India was supposed to be that story. However, it has been anything but. The airline continues to (1) _____ severe losses, its reputation requires repair, and as we

mark the first anniversary of the horrific Ahmedabad crash of Air India Flight 171, where 241 people on board and 19 on the ground lost their lives, there are more questions than answers. All this while, Air India continues to struggle with culture, cash flow, and credibility. The (2) _____ is that Air India moved from a situation of constrained capital to (3) _____ capital. But too much capital can be a curse. Because too much capital can inadvertently amplify challenges, and at scale. And capital creates a false sense of security, which then has consequent impacts. The numbers speak for themselves: A loss in excess of \$2 billion; an estimated 22 per cent-plus cut in capacity; and a wide variation in net promoter scores highlight a consistently inconsistent product. For those looking (4) _____ the numbers, the signals are many. But those calling them out are few and far between. The fact that the airline is not able to turn a profit in a duopoly market where it (5) _____ significant advantages is very telling.

21. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 1.**
 - A. amass
 - B. incur
 - C. inflict
 - D. harbor
22. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 2.**
 - A. bone of contention
 - B. skeleton in the closet
 - C. elephant in the room
 - D. writing on the wall
23. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 3.**
 - A. affluent
 - B. lavish
 - C. abundant
 - D. superfluous
24. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 4.**
 - A. besides
 - B. beyond
 - C. underneath
 - D. through
25. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 5.**
 - A. holds
 - B. holding
 - C. hold
 - D. held

Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

1. D) Both a and c

Statement a: Line from the passage: "Mr. Trump, who launched the conflict with his ally Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel on February 28, now wants to end it through talks." and "...effectively trapping the U.S. in a costly stalemate." The passage shows that the U.S. and Israel (a couple of first-world powers) initiated the conflict themselves on February 28 and are now stuck in a costly stalemate, meaning they are grappling with the strategic consequences of it. Therefore, this statement is correct.

Statement b: Line from the passage: "Yes, Iran has absorbed significant military and economic costs, but it has emerged strategically stronger by taking control of the Hormuz Strait... and now controls the Strait of Hormuz, appears unwilling to hand him a diplomatic victory." The passage clearly states that despite military and economic damages, Iran has emerged strategically stronger rather than losing its footing, and it is actively unwilling to give the U.S. a diplomatic victory. Therefore, this statement is incorrect.

Statement c: Line from the passage: "If Iran was willing to make concessions on its nuclear programme on February 27, it now insists that any discussion on the nuclear file can take place only after the U.S.-Israeli hostilities cease and the blockade is lifted." The passage shows that right before the conflict (February 27), Iran was open to concessions, but after the escalation, it has placed strict preconditions on any nuclear talks, making its stance more rigid. Therefore, this statement is correct.

2. B) Both a and c

Statement a: Line from passage: "On Wednesday he ordered strikes on Iran... Mr. Trump backed off on Thursday, claiming progress in talks." FALSE. Trump ordered strikes on Wednesday, not Thursday. On Thursday, he backed off and claimed progress, not a collapse.

Statement b: Line from passage: "When the U.S. and Israel launched the war, they wanted regime change in Tehran. More than three months later, the war, which failed to achieve any of its declared objectives..." True> The passage notes that the allies wanted regime change (political transformation) but completely failed to achieve their declared goals. Since the statement accurately reflects the passage, it is true

Statement c: Line from passage: "...an uncontrollable Israel, whose bombing of Lebanon threatens the fragile U.S.-Iran ceasefire..." FALSE. The passage explicitly states that Israel's actions in Lebanon threaten the ceasefire, meaning it is a destabilizing factor rather than a stabilizing one. Therefore, this statement is FALSE.

3. B) Unyielding

Intransigent means unwilling or refusing to change one's views or to agree about something. Similarly, unyielding describes someone or something that refuses to give way to pressure or persuasion, acting as the exact synonym.

Compliant: Agreeable and willing to yield to others (an antonym).

Fleeting: Lasting for a very short time.

Extricating: Releasing or disentangling from something

4. A) **The allied forces expected to bring off the complete dismantling of Iran's strategic assets, but instead got bogged down in a costly stalemate.**

option A: Line from the passage: "...dismantling Iran's nuclear programme, degrading its missile capabilities... effectively trapping the U.S. in a costly stalemate." The passage explicitly states that the allied forces expected the complete dismantling of Iran's programs, but the ultimate outcome was getting trapped in a costly stalemate. "Bring off" means to succeed in a difficult task, which accurately mirrors what they expected to do before getting bogged down. Therefore, this statement is correct.

option b: Line from the passage: "...the war, which failed to achieve any of its declared objectives... Rather than chasing a delusional Iranian surrender..." The passage explicitly states the war failed and that expecting a surrender is delusional, meaning they did not succeed perfectly. Therefore, this statement is incorrect.

option c: Line from the passage: "...Iran... now controls the Strait of Hormuz... Mr. Trump backed off on Thursday, claiming progress in talks." The passage shows Iran controls the Strait and Trump backed off much later, not that they expected to clear it by backing off a ceasefire on day one. Therefore, this statement is incorrect.

5. C) **Both a and c**

Critical: The author is openly critical of Donald Trump's erratic approach ("reverted to his familiar playbook", "chasing a delusional Iranian surrender", "one step forward, two steps back").

Eulogizing: Means praising highly. The author does not praise any party.

Pragmatic: Means dealing with things sensibly and realistically based on practical considerations. The author acts pragmatically by advising Washington to adopt a "phased, realistic diplomatic approach" to enforce the ceasefire and lift the blockade. Hence, option C is the correct answer.

6. C) **With no strings attached** (idiom) – An offer made without conditions or restrictions, requiring nothing in return बिना किसी शर्त के दिया गया प्रस्ताव

- **Keep one on a string** (idiom) – To control or manipulate someone किसी को अपने नियंत्रण में रखना
- **Loosen the apron strings** (idiom) – To allow someone more independence स्वतंत्रता देना
- **Loosen the purse strings** (idiom) – To spend money more freely पैसा खर्च करने में ढील देना

7. A) **The penny drops** (idiom) – Said when someone suddenly comes to realize or understand something अचानक समझ में आ जाना

8. A) The correct spelling of 'Concious / Consious / Contious' is '**Conscious**', which means "aware of and able to understand something" सचेत, जागरूक।

9. B) The correct spelling of 'nonchaliant' is '**nonchalant**', which means "calm and unconcerned; not showing anxiety" निश्चित, बेपरवाह।

10. D) The correct spelling of 'Compatable' is '**Compatible**', which means "able to exist or work together without conflict" अनुकूल, संगत।

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

Sentence R, पैराग्राफ की शुरुआत (S1 के तुरंत बाद) में आया क्योंकि इसमें मौजूद "this prestigious UNESCO designation" शब्द सीधे तौर पर S1 में बताए गए 'World Heritage List' की ओर इशारा करते हैं। यह "factual ground" तैयार करता है कि कैसे यह सूची संरक्षण (heritage protection) और फंडिंग के लिए एक शक्तिशाली उपकरण बन गई है।

Sentence P, Sentence R के बाद आया क्योंकि इसमें मौजूद "this protective status" (यह सुरक्षात्मक दर्जा) शब्द सीधे तौर पर R में स्थापित किए गए 'heritage protection' की ओर इशारा करते हैं। यह एक अनिवार्य लिंक (mandatory link) बनाता है, जो बताता है कि सोशल मीडिया के कारण यह संरक्षण का दर्जा कैसे वैश्विक पर्यटन (global tourism) के एक बड़े चुंबक में बदल गया है।

Sentence S, Sentence P के बाद आया क्योंकि इसमें मौजूद "This sudden influx of tourists" (पर्यटकों की यह अचानक भीड़) शब्द सीधे तौर पर P में बताए गए पर्यटन ('global tourism') की ओर इशारा करते हैं। यह स्पष्ट करता है कि पर्यटकों की इस भीड़ के कारण स्थानीय समुदायों के लिए अप्रत्याशित समस्याएँ (unforeseen problems) और स्थानीय विरोध (local backlash) पैदा हो रहा है।

Sentence Q, Sentence S के बाद आया क्योंकि यह पूरे scenario को एक "conclusion" (S6 से पहले) की ओर ले जाता है। इसमें "For instance" (उदाहरण के लिए) का जिक्र है जो सीधे तौर पर S में बताए गए 'local backlash' का एक वास्तविक उदाहरण (Slovakia का Vlkolínec गाँव) देता है। यह बताता है कि कैसे स्थानीय लोग इस दर्जे को हटाना चाहते हैं, जो S6 (जिसमें इन्हीं विवादों—'These emerging disputes'—के वैश्विक बहस बनने की बात है) के तार्किक प्रवाह को पूरा करता है।

- Sentence R comes at the beginning (after S1) because the phrase "this prestigious UNESCO designation" creates a mandatory link pointing directly back to the "World Heritage List" introduced in S1. It establishes the factual ground of how this status successfully functions as a tool for heritage protection.
- Sentence P follows R because the transitional phrase "this protective status" creates a mandatory link, directly referring to the "heritage protection" established at the end of R. It introduces the shift in the narrative, explaining how social media has turned this protection into a magnet for global tourism.
- Sentence S follows P as it uses the phrase "This sudden influx of tourists" to create a mandatory link pointing directly to the "global tourism" mentioned in P. It details the negative consequence of this tourism: unforeseen problems and severe local backlash.
- Sentence Q follows S as the conclusion (leading into S6). It uses the phrase "For instance" to provide a direct, real-world example (the village of Vlkolínec) of the "local backlash" described in S. This specific example of a community wanting to reject its status seamlessly bridges into S6, which summarizes these "emerging disputes" as part of a growing global debate.

12. A) **Damaged** (adjective) – Broken, harmed, impaired, defective, spoiled क्षतिग्रस्त

Antonym: **Flawless** (adjective) – Perfect, intact, unblemished, faultless, pristine निर्दोष / बिना नुकसान

- **Deteriorated** (adjective) – Worsened, damaged, decayed, degraded खराब हुआ
- **Defaced** (adjective) – Damaged, spoiled, disfigured बिगाड़ा हुआ
- **Broken** (adjective) – Damaged, shattered, cracked टूटा हुआ

13. A) **'for'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "befitting" के साथ सही preposition "for" प्रयोग किया जाता है, जिसका अर्थ होता है "उपयुक्त या शोभनीय होना किसी अवसर के लिए।" यहाँ वाक्य का अर्थ है कि यह गीत Independence Day Celebration के लिए उपयुक्त नहीं है। इसलिए, "for" सबसे सही विकल्प है।

- 'for' should be used because the correct preposition used with "befitting" is "for," which means "suitable or appropriate for an occasion." Here, the sentence conveys that the song is not suitable for the Independence Day Celebration. Thus, "for" would be the most appropriate choice.
14. D) **Jockey** (noun) – A professional rider of horses, especially in races घुड़दौड़ का पेशेवर सवार
- **Rider** (noun) – A person who rides an animal or vehicle सवार
 - **Groom** (noun) – A person who takes care of horses घोड़ों की देखभाल करने वाला
 - **Farrier** (noun) – A person who shoes horses घोड़ों को नाल लगाने वाला
15. A) **Taxidermy** (noun) – The art of preserving an animal's body by stuffing or mounting पशु शरीर को संरक्षित करने की कला
- **Scrimshaw** (noun) – Carving or engraving on bone or ivory हड्डी या दाँत पर नक्काशी
 - **Oshibana** (noun) – The art of pressing and arranging flowers दबाए हुए फूलों की कला
 - **Plastination** (noun) – A method of preserving biological tissues with polymers ऊतकों को संरक्षित करने की आधुनिक विधि
16. C) **We saw a seal clapping its fins at the zoo.**
- Option 3 सही उत्तर है क्योंकि "clapping its fins" और "at the zoo" जैसे contextual clues स्पष्ट रूप से एक marine mammal (समुद्री जीव) की शारीरिक क्रियाओं और स्थान का वर्णन करते हैं। इसके विपरीत, अन्य विकल्पों में इस homonym के बिल्कुल अलग अर्थों का उपयोग किया गया है: Option 1 एक आधिकारिक emblem या stamp (मोहर) को refer करता है, Option 2 एक document को सुरक्षित करने के लिए इस्तेमाल किए जाने वाले wax (मोम) को दर्शाता है, और Option 4 एक verb के रूप में कार्य करता है जिसका अर्थ envelope को सुरक्षित रूप से close (बंद) करना है। इसलिए, केवल तीसरा वाक्य ही "seal" को एक sea animal के रूप में सही ढंग से identify करता है।
- Option 3 is the correct answer because contextual clues like "clapping its fins" and "at the zoo" clearly describe the physical actions and location of a marine mammal. In contrast, the other options use entirely different meanings of this homonym: Option 1 refers to an official emblem or stamp, Option 2 refers to wax used to secure a document, and Option 4 functions as a verb meaning to securely close an envelope. Therefore, only the third sentence correctly identifies "seal" as a sea animal.
17. A) 'Between the advantages of' के बदले 'Among the advantages of' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि between दो वस्तुओं के लिए प्रयोग होता है, जबकि यहाँ अनेक (advantages) की बात हो रही है, इसलिए among उपयुक्त है।
- 'Among the advantages of' will be used instead of 'Between the advantages of' because "between" is used for two things, whereas "among" is used for more than two, which fits the context of multiple advantages.
18. C) **3 4 2 1**
- Sentence 3, पैराग्राफ की शुरुआत में आएगा क्योंकि यह "factual ground" तैयार करता है। यह बिना किसी पूर्व सर्वनाम (pronoun) के कहानी की शुरुआत करता है, जहाँ 1966 में 21 वर्षीय एलन टेलर (Allan Taylor) के अपने घर को छोड़कर यूरोप में बंजारे (living day to day) की तरह संघर्ष करने का परिचय दिया गया है।
- Sentence 4, Sentence 3 के बाद आएगा क्योंकि इसमें मौजूद "During those wandering years" (उन भटकने वाले वर्षों के दौरान) शब्द सीधे तौर पर 3 में बताई गई 'living day to day while sleeping in the back of a van' (वैन में सोने और संघर्ष करने) की स्थिति की ओर इशारा करते हैं। यह एक अनिवार्य लिंक

बनाता है जो बताता है कि उसी भटकाव के दौरान उन्हें रॉयल अल्बर्ट हॉल (Royal Albert Hall) में गाने का बड़ा मौका मिला।

Sentence 2, Sentence 4 के बाद आएगा क्योंकि इसमें मौजूद "such remarkable early milestones" (ऐसे उल्लेखनीय शुरुआती मील के पत्थर) शब्द सीधे तौर पर 4 में स्थापित किए गए 'Royal Albert Hall' के बड़े मंच पर परफॉरमेंस की ओर इशारा करते हैं। यह बताता है कि इस तरह की शानदार शुरुआत और रिकॉर्ड डील के बावजूद, उन्हें कभी मुख्यधारा की व्यावसायिक सफलता (mainstream success) नहीं मिली।

Sentence 1, Sentence 2 के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह पूरे scenario को एक "conclusion" की ओर ले जाता है। इसमें "However" (हालाँकि) और "settling into retirement" का जिक्र है, जो 2 में बताए गए उनके दशकों लंबे, शांत करियर के अंत को दर्शाता है। यह स्पष्ट करता है कि रिटायरमेंट के समय अचानक एड शीरन (Ed Sheeran) द्वारा उनके पुराने एल्बम की तारीफ करने से उन्हें वह पहचान मिली, जो पैराग्राफ के तार्किक प्रवाह (past to present) को पूरा करता है।

- Sentence 3 comes at the beginning because it establishes the factual ground. It introduces the primary subject, young Allan Taylor, and sets the chronological starting point of his journey in 1966 without relying on any preceding pronouns.
- Sentence 4 follows 3 because the transitional phrase "During those wandering years" creates a mandatory link pointing directly back to his nomadic lifestyle ("living day to day", "sleeping in the back of a van") established in 3. It highlights his sudden breakthrough.
- Sentence 2 follows 4 as it uses the phrase "such remarkable early milestones" to create a mandatory link pointing directly to his massive gig at the Royal Albert Hall mentioned in 4. It summarizes the trajectory of his career from that point onward.
- Sentence 1 follows 2 as the final conclusion. It uses the transition "However" to contrast his quiet, mainstream-eluded career (from 2) with a sudden burst of modern-day fame. The reference to "settling into retirement" brings the timeline to the present day, perfectly wrapping up the narrative.

19. B) The correct spelling of 'zoonotick' is '**zoonotic**', which means "relating to diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans" पशुओं से मनुष्यों में फैलने वाले रोगों से संबंधित।

20. B) **Habitual** (adjective) – Regular, customary, routine, usual, frequent आदतन / नियमित

Antonym: Occasional (adjective) – Infrequent, irregular, rare, sporadic, sometimes कभी-कभी

- **Regular** (adjective) – Habitual, routine, usual नियमित
- **Customary** (adjective) – Habitual, traditional, usual प्रचलित
- **Routine** (adjective) – Habitual, regular, usual नियमित

21. B) The blank requires a verb that correctly collocates with "severe losses." "(incur)" is the standard financial and operational term meaning to become subject to something unwelcome or unpleasant (like a debt or a loss) as a result of one's own behavior or actions. A) amass: Means to gather or accumulate a large amount, usually applied to wealth or physical items, not "severe losses" in a passive corporate sense. C) inflict: Means to cause harm or damage to someone else, whereas the airline is suffering the losses itself. D) harbor: Means to keep a thought or feeling secret, or to give shelter, which does not apply to financial losses.

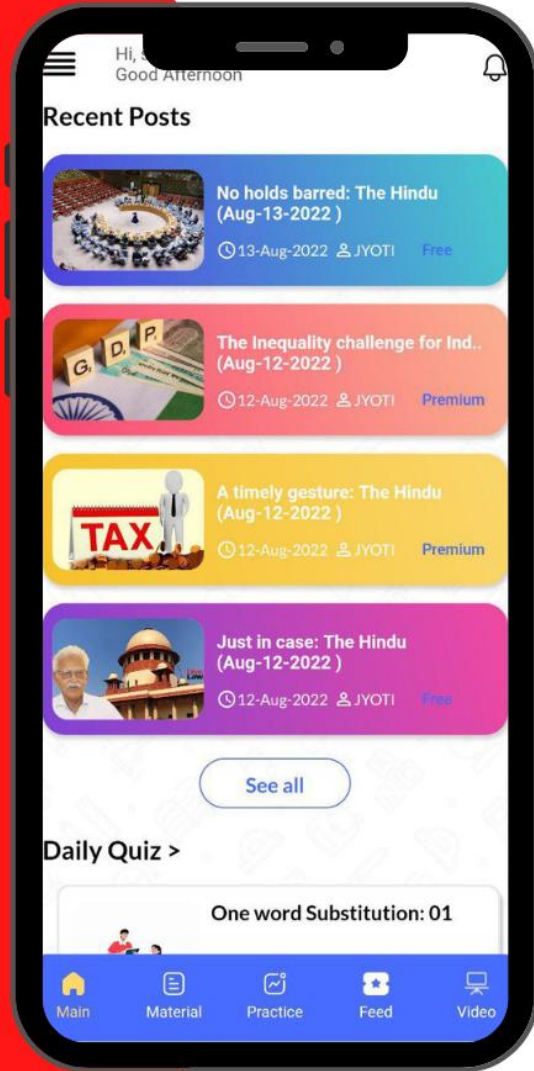
- Blank को एक ऐसे verb की आवश्यकता है जो "severe losses" के साथ सही ढंग से collocate करे। "(incur)" एक standard financial term है जिसका अर्थ अपने कार्यों के परिणामस्वरूप

कुछ अवांछनीय (जैसे ऋण या नुकसान) झेलना है। A) amass: इसका अर्थ इकट्ठा करना है (आमतौर पर धन), नुकसान के लिए नहीं। C) inflict: इसका अर्थ किसी और को नुकसान पहुँचाना है, जबकि एयरलाइन खुद नुकसान झेल रही है। D) harbor: इसका अर्थ किसी विचार को मन में रखना या शरण देना है।

22. C) The blank requires an idiom that describes a major, obvious problem or controversial issue that is present but deliberately ignored by people. "(elephant in the room)" perfectly captures the massive issue (the shift from constrained to excessive capital) that is central to the problem but not being adequately addressed. A) bone of contention: Means a subject or issue over which there is continuing disagreement or argument. B) skeleton in the closet: Refers to an embarrassing or shameful secret from the past that is kept hidden. D) writing on the wall: Means a clear sign or warning that something bad is going to happen soon.
- Blank को एक ऐसे idiom की आवश्यकता है जो एक स्पष्ट, बड़ी समस्या का वर्णन करे जो मौजूद है लेकिन लोग जानबूझकर उसे ignore कर रहे हैं। "(elephant in the room)" इस बड़ी समस्या को पूरी तरह से capture करता है जिस पर पर्याप्त रूप से चर्चा नहीं की जा रही है। A) bone of contention: इसका अर्थ विवाद का विषय है। B) skeleton in the closet: यह अतीत के किसी शर्मनाक रहस्य (secret) को refer करता है। D) writing on the wall: इसका अर्थ किसी बुरी घटना के होने का स्पष्ट संकेत है।
23. C) The blank requires an adjective to contrast with "constrained" (limited or restricted) capital. "(abundant)" means existing or available in large quantities; plentiful. It directly contrasts with "constrained." A) affluent: Means having a great deal of money, but it is used to describe people, neighborhoods, or societies, not the word "capital" itself. B) lavish: Describes luxurious, elaborate, or overly generous spending, not the sheer volume of capital available. D) superfluous: Means unnecessary or more than enough; while the capital might be "too much," the contrast to "constrained" simply requires a word meaning "plentiful" before the author explains why it is a curse.
- Blank को "constrained" (सीमित) capital के साथ contrast करने के लिए एक adjective की आवश्यकता है। "(abundant)" का अर्थ बड़ी मात्रा में उपलब्ध या प्रचुर होना है। यह सीधे "constrained" के विपरीत है। A) affluent: इसका अर्थ धनी होना है, लेकिन यह लोगों या समाजों का वर्णन करने के लिए उपयोग किया जाता है, स्वयं 'capital' (पूंजी) का नहीं। B) lavish: इसका अर्थ शानदार या खर्चीला है। D) superfluous: इसका अर्थ अनावश्यक या ज़रूरत से ज़्यादा है।
24. B) The blank requires a preposition indicating that people need to look further than, or outside the strict limits of, the financial data ("the numbers") to see the real problems. "(beyond)" precisely means at or to the further side of, or outside the scope of something. A) besides: Means in addition to, or apart from, which does not carry the metaphorical weight of "looking deeper/further." B) underneath: Means physically directly below something. D) through: Means moving in one side and out the other, which doesn't fit the idiom of looking past the surface data.
- Blank को एक preposition की आवश्यकता है जो यह दर्शाए कि वास्तविक समस्याओं को देखने के लिए लोगों को financial data ("the numbers") की सीमाओं से आगे या बाहर देखने की आवश्यकता है। "(beyond)" का सटीक अर्थ किसी चीज़ के दायरे से बाहर या उसके पार है। A) besides: इसका अर्थ 'के अलावा' है। B) underneath: इसका अर्थ physically किसी चीज़ के ठीक नीचे है। D) through: इसका अर्थ एक तरफ से दूसरी तरफ जाना है।

25. A) The blank tests subject-verb agreement and tense. The passage is narrating an ongoing, current situation, as indicated by present tense verbs like "is not able" and "is very telling". The subject of this specific clause is the pronoun "it" (referring to the airline), which is a third-person singular pronoun. Therefore, a singular present-tense verb is strictly required. "(holds)" is the only grammatically correct option. A) holding: A present participle that cannot act as a main verb without an auxiliary verb (like "is holding"). B) held: Past tense, which contradicts the present tense narrative of the sentence. D) hold: A plural present-tense verb, which mathematically disagrees with the singular subject "it."

- Blank subject-verb agreement और tense का परीक्षण करता है। Passage एक वर्तमान स्थिति का वर्णन कर रहा है, जैसा कि "is not able" और "is very telling" जैसे present tense verbs से पता चलता है। इस clause का subject pronoun "it" (जो airline को refer करता है) है, जो third-person singular है। इसलिए, strictly एक singular present-tense verb की आवश्यकता है। "(holds)" एकमात्र grammatically correct विकल्प है। A) holding: यह बिना helping verb के main verb की तरह काम नहीं कर सकता। B) held: यह past tense है, जो sentence के present tense narrative का खंडन करता है। D) hold: यह एक plural present-tense verb है, जो singular subject "it" के साथ agree नहीं करता है।



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