

Do not gamble: On the Russia-Ukraine conflict

Russia must opt for diplomatic engagement with the West

With Russia and Ukraine **escalating** their long-range attacks on each other's territory, the **risk** of the conflict **spilling over** into other parts of Europe **is** rising. There have been **isolated** but significant incidents suggesting that Russia is **carrying out** 'gray zone' attacks, testing the **resolve** of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Three explosive drones were discovered near a German airport. One was **shot down** over Romania, while another Russian **projectile landed** in Poland. European officials also say that Russia is **recruiting** foreign agents for **sabotage** and conducting cyberattacks for digital **espionage**. According to U.S. media reports, U.S. intelligence agencies believe that Russian President Vladimir Putin, under pressure **at home amid** Ukraine's growing long-range attacks, could carry out a cyberattack or a limited land **incursion** into NATO territory in the years ahead. CIA chief John Ratcliffe visited Moscow **in a bid to** warn the Kremlin against escalating the war into NATO member-states. Inside Russia, government officials and **nationalist** voices have **hardened** their **rhetoric**. A Foreign Ministry **spokesperson** recently said British military **facilities** "located both inside Ukraine and beyond its borders" may **become legitimate** targets if Ukraine continues to attack Russia with British weapons. **Mikhail Galuzin**, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, recently **threatened** to **topple** the **regime** in Kyiv and establish a new governance body — all suggesting that Russia could be preparing to escalate the war.

Russia still has no clear path to victory. Yes, Russia has taken more than 20% of Ukraine's pre-2014 territory. But its **incremental** territorial gains have slowed. Until early this year, the Russians were using **artillery**, **glide bombs**, drones and **infantry** to **blast** through Ukraine's deeply **entrenched** positions. But with its long-range attacks, particularly on Russia's energy sector, supply networks, and military systems, Ukraine's new **aerial front** is **inflicting** economic pain on the Russians. According to some reports, Ukrainian attacks have **knocked out** roughly 20% of Russia's refining capacity. Russia is also **striking** Ukraine — its air defences are weak — with drones and ballistic missiles. But with continuing support from Europe, Kyiv has **managed to withstand** Russia's hits. But this **stalemate** is dangerous. Under pressure at home and stuck on the frontline, Russia could use U.S. **preoccupation** in the Persian Gulf to escalate the conflict and break the **impasse**. But that would be a huge mistake, as it could **trigger** an **all-out** war between two nuclear-armed sides. Escalation would only **compound** Russia's problems. Mr. Putin should instead opt for serious diplomatic engagement with Ukraine and the West, to **find a middle ground** and end Europe's longest war since the Second World War.

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

[Practice Exercise]

Vocabulary

1. **Gamble** (verb) - risk, bet, hazard, wager, speculate जोखिम उठाना
2. **Opt for** (phrase) - to make a choice of one thing or possibility instead of others चुनना
3. **Diplomatic** (adjective) - political, statecraft, tactful, negotiated, intergovernmental कूटनीतिक
4. **Engagement** (noun) - involvement, interaction, dialogue, participation, commitment जुड़ाव या बातचीत
5. **Escalate** (verb) - intensify, increase, mount, heighten, worsen बढ़ाना
6. **Spill over** (phrasal verb) - to start in one area and then affect other areas फैलना
7. **Isolate** (verb) - segregate, separate, detach, quarantine, insulate अलग करना
8. **Carry out** (phrasal verb) - to perform or complete a job or activity; to fulfill पूरा करना
9. **Gray zone** (noun) - a situation where the rules are unclear and it is difficult to decide what is right or wrong संदेहास्पद क्षेत्र
10. **Shoot down** (phrasal verb) - to shoot and usually kill someone, showing no sympathy मार गिराना
11. **Projectile** (noun) - missile, rocket, shell, bomb, bullet मिसाइल
12. **Land** (verb) - touch down, arrive, come down, alight, strike उतरना
13. **Recruit** (verb) - enlist, engage, employ, hire, sign up भर्ती करना
14. **Sabotage** (noun) - subversion, disruption, vandalism, destruction, damage तोड़फोड़
15. **Espionage** (noun) - spying, intelligence, infiltration, surveillance, covert operation जासूसी
16. **At home** (phrase) - in a familiar or comfortable situation देश के भीतर
17. **Amid** (preposition) - among, amongst, amidst, during के बीच
18. **Incursion** (noun) - invasion, raid, attack, intrusion, foray आक्रमण
19. **In a bid to** (adverb) - in an attempt or effort to achieve something के प्रयास में
20. **Nationalist** (adjective) - patriotic, chauvinistic, loyalist, jingoistic, ultranationalist राष्ट्रवादी
21. **Hardened** (adjective) - toughened, strict, firm, steeled, resolute कठोर बनाना
22. **Rhetoric** (noun) - grandiloquence, bombast, discourse, speech, oratorical style बयानबाजी
23. **Spokesperson** (noun) - representative, spokesman प्रवक्ता
24. **Legitimate** (adjective) - lawful, valid, legal, justified, rightful वैध या उचित
25. **Threaten** (verb) - menace, intimidate, warn, endanger, imperil धमकी देना
26. **Topple** (verb) - overthrow, overturn, dethrone, unseat, collapse सत्ता से हटाना
27. **Regime** (noun) - government, administration, rule, authority, governance शासन
28. **Incremental** (adjective) - gradual, progressive, step-by-step, additive, growing क्रमिक

29. **Artillery** (noun) - ordnance, heavy guns, cannons, weaponry, arms तोपखाना
30. **Glide bombs** (noun) - bombs that use aerodynamic lift to travel toward a target after being released from an aircraft ग्लाइड बम
31. **Infantry** (noun) - soldiers who fight on foot पैदल सेना
32. **Blast** (verb) - blow up, explode, shatter, dynamite, destroy उड़ा देना
33. **Entrenched** (adjective) - rooted, fixed, established, deeply embedded, deep-seated गहरे जड़े हुए
34. **Aerial** (adjective) - airborne, flying, atmospheric, aviation, overhead हवाई
35. **Front** (noun) - battlefield, line, warfront, sector, theater मोर्चा
36. **Inflict** (verb) - impose, cause, visit, wreak, administer थोपना
37. **Knock out** (phrasal verb) - to defeat a person or a team in a competition so that they can no longer take part in it हरा देना
38. **Strike** (verb) - hit, attack, smite, beat, assault प्रहार करना
39. **Manage** (to) (verb) - succeed, accomplish, achieve, cope, handle सफलतापूर्वक करना
40. **Withstand** (verb) - resist, endure, bear, tolerate, weather सामना करना
41. **Stalemate** (noun) - deadlock, impasse, standstill, standoff, gridlock गतिरोध
42. **Preoccupation** (noun) - distraction, obsession, engrossment, engagement, focus व्यस्तता
43. **Impasse** (noun) - deadlock, stalemate, standstill, stalemate, gridlock गतिरोध
44. **Trigger** (verb) - cause, spark, activate, prompt, initiate शुरू करना
45. **All-out** (adjective) - total, complete, full-scale, comprehensive, exhaustive पूर्ण
46. **Compound** (verb) - worsen, intensify, aggravate, augment, amplify बढ़ाना
47. **Find a ground** (phrase) - to discover shared opinions or interests समझौता खोजना

Summary of the Editorial

1. **Russia and Ukraine are escalating** long-range attacks against each other, increasing the danger of the conflict spreading beyond Ukraine.
2. Several incidents involving **Russian drones and projectiles** near or inside NATO countries suggest a growing threat to European security.
3. Russia is allegedly using **"gray zone" tactics**, including sabotage, cyberattacks, espionage and recruitment of foreign agents.
4. U.S. intelligence reportedly fears that Russia could launch a **cyberattack or limited military incursion** into NATO territory in the future.
5. Western officials are attempting to **warn Russia against further escalation**, as any attack on a NATO member could widen the war dramatically.
6. Inside Russia, **nationalist rhetoric has hardened**, with officials increasingly making threatening statements against Ukraine and Western countries.
7. Russia has threatened to target **British military facilities** if Ukraine continues using British-supplied weapons to attack Russian territory.
8. Russian officials have even spoken about **toppling Ukraine's government**, indicating that Moscow may be considering further escalation.
9. Despite occupying more than **20% of Ukraine's pre-2014 territory**, Russia has no clear path to achieving a decisive victory.
10. Russia's **territorial advances have slowed**, while Ukraine has strengthened its ability to conduct long-range attacks.
11. Ukrainian strikes on **Russia's energy, supply and military infrastructure** are causing significant economic and strategic damage.
12. Ukrainian attacks have reportedly disrupted around **20% of Russia's oil-refining capacity**, increasing pressure on the Russian economy.
13. Russia continues to attack Ukraine with **drones and ballistic missiles**, but Ukraine has managed to withstand these attacks with continuing European support.
14. The current **stalemate is extremely dangerous** because Russia, under domestic pressure, could exploit U.S. attention elsewhere to escalate the conflict, potentially triggering an **all-out war between nuclear-armed powers**.
15. The editorial argues that **Russia should not gamble on further escalation**. Instead, President Putin should pursue serious **diplomatic engagement with Ukraine and the West**, find common ground, and work toward ending the war.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What does the author mean by the term "gray zone attacks" in the context of this passage?**
A. military invasions that openly violate international maritime borders. **[Editorial Page]**
B. Sub-conventional operations designed to bypass traditional warfare triggers.
C. Diplomatic negotiations aimed at establishing neutral zones between rivals.
D. Coordinated aerial strikes using only recognized stealth drone technology.
2. **Which of the following best captures the central theme of the passage?**
A. The technical superiority of Ukrainian aerial defenses against modern Russian ballistic missile technology.
B. The logistical difficulty of maintaining energy supply networks during periods of prolonged international sanctions.
C. The critical necessity of shifting from a dangerous military deadlock toward a negotiated diplomatic settlement.
D. The historical significance of the Second World War in shaping the current nationalist rhetoric of East Europe.
3. **In the author's view, what external factor determines Russia's potential timing for escalation?**
A. The formal induction of Ukraine into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.
B. The perceived diversion of American attention toward Middle Eastern unrest.
C. The depletion of British and German long-range missile stockpiles.
D. The arrival of the winter season which favors Russian defensive positions.
4. **In the sentence, "Mr. Putin should instead opt for serious diplomatic engagement with Ukraine and the West," the phrase "for serious diplomatic engagement" is:**
A. a gerund phrase acting as the direct object of the principal verb.
B. a prepositional phrase acting as an adverb to modify the verb opt.
C. an adjectival phrase modifying the noun phrase "Ukraine and West."
D. an appositive phrase providing extra details about the person Putin.
5. **What does the author suggest as the critical alternative to prevent an all-out international war?**
A. increase in long-range missile strikes against British targets.
B. withdrawal of all NATO surveillance drones from East Europe.
C. transition from military maneuvers to constructive high-level mediation.
D. dismantling of the current governance body within the Kyiv state.
6. **Select the appropriate synonym for the underlined word.**
Don't sound so excited
A. casual
B. composed
C. eager
D. tired
7. **Four sentences are given out of which three have spelling errors. Choose the sentence with all correctly spelt words**
A. What was the begining of the dispute?
B. There is no comparision between the two books.
C. She handlled the situation cooly

- D. I got selected in D category
8. **Identify the segment that contains a grammatical error. If there is no error, select 'No error.'**
Fred and George had / bewitched their trunks to fly downstairs to / save the bother of carrying them.
A. bewitched their trunks to fly downstairs to
B. save the bother of carrying them.
C. Fred and George had
D. No error
9. **Select the most appropriate word for the given group of words**
Information especially of a biased or misleading nature used to promote a political cause or point of view
A. welter
B. Propaganda
C. Potable
D. Orchard
10. **Direction: Rearrange the following parts (1, 2, 3, 4) to form a meaningful, logical, and coherent passage.**
1. Mass flowering has been recorded across parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
2. Scientifically known as *Strobilanthes kunthiana*, the flower is associated with the high-altitude grasslands of the Western Ghats and is best known for its roughly 12-year flowering cycle.
3. Few natural spectacles are as striking as a hillside covered in Neelakurinji's violet-blue blooms.
4. The last major flowering seasons in several well-known locations were in the late 2010s and early 2020s, so travellers should check local forest department and tourism updates rather than assume flowers will bloom every year
A. 3-2-1-4
B. 2-3-1-4
C. 3-1-2-4
D. 3-2-4-1
11. **Select the appropriate synonym for the underlined word.**
You look around and you see green happy plants
A. mourning
B. nascent
C. blissful
D. gloomy
12. **Select the most appropriate antonym of the given word.**
Crude
A. Beastly
B. Ripe
C. Stubble
D. Intense
13. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank.**
She has a large, _____ sympathy and absolute fairness of temper

- A. mean
B. sparing
C. generous
D. thrifty
14. **Identify the segment that contains a grammatical error. If there is no error, select 'No error'**
Your body will respond by/ getting more muscular and/ strong before you know it.
A. strong before you know it.
B. No error
C. Your body will respond by
D. getting more muscular and
15. **Fill in the blank with the most appropriate option.**
Well, that was ___ good,' said Harper.
A. pleasing
B. gorgeous
C. beautiful
D. pretty
16. **Select the word segment that substitute (replaces) the bracketed word segment correctly and completes the sentence meaningfully. Select the option 'no correction required' if the sentence is correct as given.**
He lost his temper (by a driver) flashed ber headlights as he ovenook
A. afterwards a driver
B. No correction required
C. considering a driver
D. after a driver
17. **In the following question, out of the given four alternatives select the alternative which best expresses the meaning of the Idiom/Phrase.**
Fairly and squarely
A. Suddenly
B. Rigorously
C. Wholly
D. Honestly
18. **Direction: 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 A, B, C, and D. Rearrange these four parts to form a meaningful, logical, and coherent passage.**
S1. In the early 20th Century, Chennai's Royapuram underwent a transformation that made it look distinct from the rest of Madras.
A. Royapuram felt foreign to the rest of the city.
B. Now, the echoes of that music have faded, and Royapuram, with its busy narrow streets and jaded buildings, has blended into the rest of Chennai.
C. With the sea on one side, music from every corner, and a large Anglo-Indian population jamming to it,
D. Barring a few institutions that mark the presence of Anglo-Indians who once lived here, the community's numbers have dwindled.

S6. These stories were revisited during a heritage walk led by architect Muhilann M and S Prasanna as part of a collaboration between NinetyEight.Madras and Made of Chennai.

- A. C-A-D-B
- B. B-C-A-D
- C. C-A-B-D
- D. A-C-B-D

19. **Choose the word that can substitute the given group of words.**

A container for housing honeybees

- A. Colonies
- B. Hive
- C. Pack
- D. Shoal

20. **The statemem below has been given with bracketed text. Select the option with correct Idiom for the bracketed text.**

He (made an irreversible change, that will greatly impact his life) when he got that huge tattoo on his back!

- A. beat the dead horse
- B. became the devil's advocate
- C. crossed the Rubicon
- D. put a rose on his nose

Directions: Five words in the passage below have been replaced with blanks. Choose the option that best completes each one.

Vidura was an (1)___ of Yama Dharma Raja (the God of Justice), who was (2)___ by sage Mandavya to be born on earth. Vidura grew up with unmatched wisdom, righteousness and humility. His devotion to truth, dharma, and Lord Krishna was unmatched. Vidura is known as Vidura Azhwan because his pure devotion (bhakti) earned him a place among the highly revered Azwars, said Tirukudanthai Dr. Venkatesh in a discourse. Dharmaputra says Vidura raised and protected the five Pandavas like a bird, with dharma on one wing and wisdom on the other. He fearlessly spoke the truth to King Dhritarashtra and Duryodhana, warning them against injustice and wrongdoing committed against the Pandavas that would lead to the destruction of the Kaurava (3)___. When Duryodhana and Dushasana humiliated Draupadi in the royal court, great elders such as Bhishma and Dronacharya did not (4)___ to stop the injustice. Vidura was one of the most prominent voices who courageously spoke against what was happening. An important portion of the Mahabharata is Vidura Neethi, the wise counsel and advice given by Vidura to Dhritarashtra. It can be described as a precious gem of the Mahabharata, containing profound teachings on dharma, righteousness, conduct, wisdom, and the right way of living.

Lord Krishna travels to Hastinapur as the Pandavas' peace envoy to prevent the great war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. He firmly (5)___ Duryodhana's, Bhishma's and Drona's hospitality and walks directly to Vidura's simple house because Vidura's heart is pure, free of greed, and filled with devotion. Many Acharyas have stated that the food Vidura offered to Lord Krishna is considered pure, like the atma (soul) of Nammazhwar, which the Lord cherished most. From this profound comparison, we can understand Vidura's greatness, purity, and exalted qualities.

21. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank (1):**
- A. manifestation
 - B. incarnation
 - C. offspring
 - D. apparition
22. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank (2):**
- A. doomed
 - B. condemn
 - C. decreed
 - D. cursed
23. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank (3):**
- A. dynasty
 - B. ancestry
 - C. lineage
 - D. fraternity
24. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank (4):**
- A. intervene
 - B. interceded
 - C. interfere
 - D. retaliate
25. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank (5):**
- A. forgo
 - B. declines
 - C. spurns
 - D. eschews

Answers

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

[Practice Exercise]

Explanations

1. B) **Sub-conventional operations designed to bypass traditional warfare triggers.**

Line from passage: "There have been isolated but significant incidents suggesting that Russia is carrying out 'gray zone' attacks, testing the resolve of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The passage explicitly frames these acts as "isolated but significant incidents" whose purpose is "testing the resolve of NATO" — not full-scale war. The examples given (stray drones, a single projectile, sabotage recruitment, cyberattacks) are all covert, deniable, and limited in scale — actions calculated to stay just below the threshold that would trigger a formal NATO military response (such as Article 5). This matches the definition of "gray zone" operations: sub-conventional actions that avoid clearly crossing into open war.

Option A: Incorrect — the passage describes isolated drone/projectile incidents, not full "invasions," and never mentions "maritime borders."

Option C: Incorrect — the passage presents diplomacy as the opposite of gray zone attacks ("Putin should instead opt for serious diplomatic engagement"), not a description of them.

Option D: Incorrect — the passage lists sabotage and cyberattacks alongside drones, so "only stealth drone technology" is too narrow and contradicted by the passage.

2. C) **The critical necessity of shifting from a dangerous military deadlock toward a negotiated diplomatic settlement.**

Line: "But this stalemate is dangerous... Escalation would only compound Russia's problems. Mr. Putin should instead opt for serious diplomatic engagement with Ukraine and the West, to find a middle ground and end Europe's longest war since the Second World War." This line, combined with the title itself ("Russia must opt for diplomatic engagement with the West"), directly states the passage's core argument: the current stalemate — marked by gray zone attacks, escalating long-range strikes, and the risk of NATO involvement — is unsustainable and dangerous, and the solution being urged is diplomacy rather than continued military confrontation. The entire passage builds toward this conclusion, discussing the risks of escalation before landing on this recommendation.

(a) Incorrect — the passage mentions Ukraine's "air defences are weak," which contradicts the claim of "technical superiority," and this is a minor supporting detail, not the central theme.

(b) Incorrect — energy supply networks are mentioned only briefly as a target of Ukrainian strikes ("particularly on Russia's energy sector"), not as a central discussion of sanctions or logistics.

(d) Incorrect — the Second World War is referenced only once, as a comparison for the war's duration ("Europe's longest war since the Second World War"), not as an explanation for nationalist rhetoric or a historical analysis.

3. B) **The perceived diversion of American attention toward Middle Eastern unrest.**

Line: "Under pressure at home and stuck on the frontline, Russia could use U.S. preoccupation in the Persian Gulf to escalate the conflict and break the impasse." This line identifies the external factor determining Russia's potential timing for escalation: the U.S. being distracted

or occupied with matters in the Persian Gulf (Middle East). The author suggests Russia could exploit this window of reduced American attention to escalate the conflict.

(a) Incorrect — the passage never mentions Ukraine's "formal induction" into NATO; it only discusses NATO's resolve being tested by gray zone attacks, not Ukraine's membership status.

(c) Incorrect — the passage does not mention any "depletion" of British or German missile stockpiles; it only references British weapons being used by Ukraine to strike Russia, with no discussion of supply running out.

(d) Incorrect — the passage makes no mention of "winter season" or seasonal military advantages.

4. **B) a prepositional phrase acting as an adverb to modify the verb opt.**

Line: "Mr. Putin should instead opt for serious diplomatic engagement with Ukraine and the West..." The phrase "for serious diplomatic engagement" begins with the preposition "for," making it a prepositional phrase. It answers the question "opt for what?" — functioning adverbially by specifying/modifying the verb "opt," telling us what action Putin should choose. The verb "opt" characteristically pairs with "for" (opt for something), and this phrase completes that verb's meaning, which is the role of an adverbial prepositional phrase.

(a) Incorrect — a gerund phrase requires an "-ing" verb form (e.g., "engaging diplomatically"); "diplomatic engagement" is a noun phrase (adjective + noun), not a gerund phrase.

(c) Incorrect — an adjectival phrase would need to directly modify the noun "Ukraine and the West," but "for serious diplomatic engagement" comes before "with Ukraine and the West" and modifies the verb "opt," not the noun phrase that follows it.

(d) Incorrect — an appositive renames or provides extra identifying detail about a noun immediately beside it (e.g., "Mr. Putin, the Russian President, ..."); "for serious diplomatic engagement" does not rename or describe "Putin" — it describes the action he should take.

5. **C) transition from military maneuvers to constructive high-level mediation.**

Line: "Escalation would only compound Russia's problems. Mr. Putin should instead opt for serious diplomatic engagement with Ukraine and the West, to find a middle ground and end Europe's longest war since the Second World War." This line directly states the author's proposed alternative to prevent all-out war: moving away from military escalation and toward "serious diplomatic engagement" — a shift from armed conflict to negotiation/mediation between the involved parties, which matches "constructive high-level mediation."

Option A: Incorrect — the passage mentions British military facilities becoming "legitimate targets" as a threat from Russia's Foreign Ministry, not as the author's suggested solution; this represents escalation, not the alternative to it.

Option B: Incorrect — the passage never mentions "NATO surveillance drones" or their withdrawal; it only discusses Russian drones/projectiles as gray zone threats, not NATO's own drone operations.

Option D: Incorrect — "dismantling the governance body" reverses the actual threat in the passage, where Galuzin "threatened to topple the regime in Kyiv and establish a new governance body" — this is Russia's aggressive threat, not the author's recommended alternative.

6. **C) Excited (adjective) – Feeling or showing happiness and enthusiasm, thrilled, eager, animated. उत्साहित**

Synonym: **Eager** (adjective) – (similar in meaning to excited) Having or showing keen interest or intense desire or impatient expectancy. इच्छुक

- **Tired** (adjective) – Exhausted, in need of rest or sleep, weary. थका हुआ
- **Casual** (adjective) – Relaxed and unconcerned, not serious, informal. आकस्मिक
- **Composed** (adjective) – Having one's feelings and expression under control; calm, collected, unruffled. शांत

7. D) **I got selected in D category**

8. A) 'there' के बदले 'their' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'there' एक अव्यय है जो किसी स्थान को दर्शाता है, जबकि 'their' एक सर्वनाम है जो स्वामित्व को दर्शाता है। यहाँ पर बात स्वामित्व की हो रही है— Fred and George के trunks की, अतः सही शब्द 'their' होगा। जैसे— Fred and George had bewitched their trunks to fly downstairs to save the bother of carrying them

- 'their' will be used instead of 'there' because 'there' is an adverb indicating location, while 'their' is a pronoun indicating possession. The sentence discusses ownership— of Fred and George's trunks, therefore, the correct word is 'their'. Like— Fred and George had bewitched their trunks to fly downstairs to save the bother of carrying them

9. B) **Propaganda** (noun) – Information especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view. प्रचार

- **Welter** (noun) – This term does not correspond to a commonly recognized English word relevant to the context. It seems to be a misspelling or a misinterpretation. हडबडी
- **Potable** (adjective) – Safe to drink; drinkable. पीने योग्य
- **Orchard** (noun) – A piece of enclosed land planted with fruit trees. बाग

10. A) **3-2-1-4**

Explanation:

Hindi Explanation:

- Sentence 3 पैराग्राफ की शुरुआत करेगा क्योंकि यह introductory sentence है। यह पैसेज का पहला वाक्य है जो बिना किसी पूर्व संदर्भ के सीधे मुख्य विषय को प्रस्तुत करता है कि नीलाकुरिंजी (Neelakurinji) के बैंगनी-नीले फूलों से ढकी पहाड़ी जैसा शानदार प्राकृतिक दृश्य शायद ही कोई दूसरा हो।
- Sentence 2 Sentence 3 के बाद आएगा क्योंकि इसमें प्रयुक्त शब्द "the flower" सीधे तौर पर Sentence 3 में उल्लिखित Neelakurinji को refer करता है। यह इसके वैज्ञानिक नाम (Strobilanthes kunthiana), पश्चिमी घाट (Western Ghats) के उच्च-घास के मैदानों और इसके लगभग 12 साल के flowering cycle का विवरण देता है।
- Sentence 1 Sentence 2 के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह Sentence 2 में बताए गए 12-वर्षीय चक्र से आगे बढ़ते हुए उन विशिष्ट राज्यों (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka) का उल्लेख करता है जहाँ इस पौधे की सामूहिक पुष्पन (mass flowering) दर्ज की गई है।
- Sentence 4 Sentence 1 के बाद आएगा और क्रम का conclusion बनेगा। यह पिछली प्रमुख flowering seasons (late 2010s और early 2020s) का संदर्भ देते हुए यात्रियों को व्यावहारिक सलाह देता है कि वे हर साल खिलने की उम्मीद करने के बजाय forest department और tourism के updates की जाँच करें।

English Explanation:

- Sentence 3 starts the paragraph as the introductory sentence, strictly using the opening line of the provided text. It independently introduces the striking natural visual of a hillside covered in Neelakurinji's violet-blue blooms.
 - Sentence 2 follows Sentence 3 because the noun phrase "the flower" directly refers back to the Neelakurinji blooms in Sentence 3, establishing its scientific taxonomy (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*), high-altitude grassland habitat in the Western Ghats, and iconic 12-year blooming interval.
 - Sentence 1 follows Sentence 2 because it builds on the botanical characteristics by stating the precise geographical regions across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka where mass flowering events occur.
 - Sentence 4 comes after Sentence 1 as the logical conclusion. It cites recent historical cycles (late 2010s and early 2020s) to advise travellers to verify official forest and tourism updates rather than assuming annual blooming.
11. C) **Happy** (adjective) – Feeling or showing pleasure or contentment, joyful, cheerful, delighted. खुश
 Synonym: **Blissful** (adjective) – Extremely happy; full of joy, joyful, delighted, in bliss. सुखद
- **Mourning** (adjective) – The expression of deep sorrow for someone who has died, often involving certain conventions such as wearing black clothes. शोक
 - **Nascent** (adjective) – Just coming into existence and beginning to display signs of future potential, budding, emerging. उदीयमान
 - **Gloomy** (adjective) – Dark or poorly lit, especially so as to appear depressing or frightening, bleak, dismal. उदास
12. B) **Crude** (adjective) – In a natural or raw state; not yet processed or refined, basic, rudimentary. कच्चा
 Antonym: **Ripe** (adjective) – Fully developed or matured and ready to be eaten or used, advanced, ready. पका
- **Beastly** (adjective) – Like a beast; very unpleasant, disagreeable, or grossly offensive. जानवर जैसा
 - **Stubble** (noun) – Short, stiff stalks of grain or hair left on a field or skin after harvesting or shaving. खेत में कटाई के बाद बचा हुआ अवशेष
 - **Intense** (adjective) – Of extreme force, degree, or strength; highly concentrated. प्रचंड
13. C) **generous** का use होगा क्योंकि 'generous' का अर्थ होता है उदार या दानशील होना। Sentence में कहा गया है कि उसके पास बड़ी सहानुभूति और संपूर्ण न्यायपूर्ण स्वभाव है, जो उदारता की भावना को दर्शाता है। 'Generous' इस context में सही फिट बैठता है क्योंकि यह उसकी विशाल सहानुभूति और न्यायपूर्ण स्वभाव के विवरण को पूरक करता है। जबकि 'Mean' का अर्थ होता है कंजूस या नीच, 'Sparing' का अर्थ होता है किफायती या कम खर्च करने वाला, और 'Thrifty' का अर्थ है मितव्ययी, जो इस context में सही नहीं है
- 'generous' should be used because 'generous' means showing a readiness to give more of something, as money or time, than is strictly necessary or expected. The sentence describes her having a large sympathy and absolute fairness of temper, indicating a spirit of generosity. 'Generous' fits this context correctly as it complements the description of her expansive sympathy and equitable temperament. Whereas, 'mean'

implies stinginess or malice, 'sparing' suggests restraint or moderation, and 'thrifty' indicates using money and other resources carefully and not wastefully, which do not fit in this context

14. A) 'strong' के बदले **'stronger'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि वाक्य 'more muscular and strong' का उपयोग Comparative Degree में हो रहा है, और जब दो विशेषणों (adjectives) की तुलना की जा रही हो, तो दोनों को समान रूप से Comparative Degree में होना चारा है; जैसे— Your body will respond by getting more muscular and stronger before you know it.

- 'stronger' will be used instead of 'strong' because the phrase 'more muscular and strong' is being used in a Comparative Degree, and when two adjectives are being compared, both should be in the Comparative Degree equally; Like— Your body will respond by getting more muscular and stronger before you know it

15. D) **'pretty'** का use होगा क्योंकि 'pretty' शब्द का अर्थ होता है अच्छा या मनभावन इस्तेमाल में लेकिन हल्के संदर्भ में। यहाँ, हार्पर की प्रतिक्रिया संकेत देती है कि वह किसी चीज़ की सराहना कर रहे हैं, पर उसे बहुत अधिक महत्वपूर्ण या गंभीर नहीं मानते हैं, इसलिए 'pretty' यहाँ उपयुक्त है। 'Pleasing' का अर्थ होता है संतोषजनक, 'Gorgeous' और 'Beautiful' का उपयोग अक्सर बहुत अधिक सुंदरता या आकर्षण को व्यक्त करने के लिए किया जाता है, जो कि इस संदर्भ में ज्यादा हो सकता है।

- 'pretty' should be used because 'pretty' means pleasing or attractive in a delicate or endearing way. Here, Harper's comment indicates a casual appreciation, implying something is moderately good without being overly serious or profound, making 'pretty' suitable. 'Pleasing' means giving satisfaction, while 'Gorgeous' and 'Beautiful' are used to express very high degrees of beauty or appeal, which might be excessive for this context

16. D) after a driver' के बदले **'by a driver'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि प्रसंग से स्पष्ट है कि 'चालक द्वारा हेडलाइट्स चमकाए जाने के बाद' वह अपना आपा खो बैठा। यहाँ 'by' का प्रयोग गलत है क्योंकि 'by' किसी क्रिया के कारण होने वाले परिणाम को नहीं दर्शाता है। 'After' का प्रयोग समय के संदर्भ में होता है, जो इस संदर्भ में उचित है; जैसे— He lost his temper after a driver flashed her headlights as he overtook

- after a driver' will be used instead of 'by a driver' because the context makes it clear that he lost his temper 'after a driver flashed her headlights as he overtook'. The use of 'by' is incorrect here as 'by' does not indicate the consequence of an action caused by someone. 'After' is used in reference to time, which is appropriate in this context; Like— He lost his temper after a driver flashed her headlights as he overtook

17. D) **Fairly and squarely** (idiom) - Honestly ईमानदारी से

18. C) **C-A-B-D**

Explanation:

Hindi Explanation:

- Sentence C S1 के तुरंत बाद आएगा क्योंकि S1 में 20वीं सदी की शुरुआत में रोयापुरम (Royapuram) के अनोखे बदलाव की बात की गई है। Sentence C उस वातावरण का विवरण देता है—एक तरफ समुद्र, हर कोने से संगीत और एंग्लो-इंडियन आबादी।
- Sentence A Sentence C के साथ जुड़ता है और वाक्य को पूरा करता है कि इन सब कारणों से रोयापुरम शहर के बाकी हिस्सों से बिल्कुल अलग और विदेशी (foreign) महसूस होता था।

- Sentence B Sentence A के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह शब्द "Now" और "that music" के साथ वर्तमान स्थिति का विरोधाभास प्रस्तुत करता है कि कैसे वह संगीत अब शांत हो चुका है और रोयापुरम चेन्नई के बाकी हिस्सों में घुल-मिल गया है।
- Sentence D Sentence B के बाद आएगा और S6 से ठीक पहले जुड़ेगा। यह बताता है कि कुछ पुरानी संस्थाओं को छोड़कर अब यहाँ एंग्लो-इंडियन समुदाय की संख्या काफी घट (dwindled) चुकी है। अंत में, S6 में प्रयुक्त phrase "These stories" रोयापुरम के इस ऐतिहासिक बदलाव की कहानियों को refer करते हुए heritage walk के संदर्भ के साथ passage को समाप्त करता है।

English Explanation:

- Sentence C follows S1 directly because S1 introduces the early 20th-century transformation that made Royapuram distinct, and Sentence C elaborates on the cultural setting (sea on one side, music, and the Anglo-Indian population).
- Sentence A completes the clause started in Sentence C, concluding that the area felt completely foreign compared to the rest of the city.
- Sentence B follows Sentence A because the transition word "Now" and the phrase "that music" contrast the vibrant past with the present, showing how the music faded and Royapuram blended into Chennai.
- Sentence D follows Sentence B and links before S6, noting that except for a few remaining institutions, the local Anglo-Indian population has dwindled. Finally, S6 uses the phrase "These stories" to reference the entire historical narrative recalled during the heritage walk

19. B) **Hive** (noun) - A container for housing honeybees. मधुमक्खियों को रखने के लिए एक कंटेनर

- **Colonies** (noun) – Groups of the same kind of animals, plants, or people living or growing together. समूह
- **Pack** (noun) – A group of animals, especially wolves, living and hunting together. झुंड
- **Shoal** (noun) – A large number of fish swimming together. मछलियों का झुंड

20. C) **He crossed the Rubicon** (idiom) - made an irreversible change, that will greatly impact his life उसने अपने जीवन पर गहरा प्रभाव डालने वाला अपरिवर्तनीय परिवर्तन किया जब उसने अपनी पीठ पर वह विशाल टैटू बनवाया!

21. B) **incarnation**

Blank (1) needs a noun for a god literally being born in a human body — the exact idea in "born on earth." a) manifestation: means a quality or idea becoming visible (e.g., "a manifestation of courage"), violating the requirement since it describes a trait showing itself, not a god's literal birth. b) incarnation: means a deity born in physical, human form, matching "born on earth" exactly. c) offspring: means someone's biological child, violating the requirement since Vidura is the god reborn, not the god's child. d) apparition: means a ghost-like vision that appears and fades, violating the requirement since it's the opposite of an actual, living birth.

In Hindi:

- Blank (1) में ऐसा noun चाहिए जो बताए कि भगवान खुद इंसान का शरीर लेकर जन्मे — यही बात "born on earth" में कही गई है। a) manifestation: इसका मतलब है कोई quality या idea दिखने लगना (जैसे "a manifestation of courage"), जो violate करता है क्योंकि यह किसी गुण के दिखने की बात करता है, भगवान के असली जन्म की नहीं। b) incarnation: इसका मतलब है

भगवान का शरीर लेकर जन्म लेना, जो "born on earth" से पूरी तरह match करता है। c) offspring: इसका मतलब है किसी की संतान, जो violate करता है क्योंकि Vidura खुद भगवान का जन्म हैं, भगवान के बच्चे नहीं। d) apparition: इसका मतलब है भूत जैसा साया जो दिखकर गायब हो जाए, जो violate करता है क्योंकि यह असली, ज़िंदा जन्म के बिल्कुल उल्टा है।

22. D) cursed

Blank (2) needs a verb for one specific person deliberately placing a curse — exactly what "by sage Mandavya" describes. a) doomed: means fated for something bad in a vague, impersonal way (e.g., "doomed by bad luck"), violating the requirement since it lacks a specific person performing a specific act. b) condemn: means officially sentencing someone to punishment (like a judge), violating the requirement since the sentence needs the passive form "condemned," and its courtroom tone doesn't fit a mythological curse. c) decreed: means formally ordering something (like a king's decree), violating the requirement since it's administratively neutral, missing a curse's punishing intent. d) cursed: means placing an imprecation that causes suffering, matching "by sage Mandavya" as one person's deliberate supernatural punishment.

In Hindi:

- Blank (2) में ऐसा verb चाहिए जो एक खास व्यक्ति द्वारा जानबूझकर श्राप देने को दर्शाए — ठीक वैसे जैसे "by sage Mandavya" में कहा गया है। a) doomed: इसका मतलब है सामान्य, अस्पष्ट तरीके से बुरी किस्मत मिलना (जैसे "doomed by bad luck"), जो violate करता है क्योंकि इसमें कोई खास व्यक्ति खास काम करता नहीं दिखता। b) condemn: इसका मतलब है किसी को सज़ा सुनाना (जैसे एक जज करता है), जो violate करता है क्योंकि sentence को passive रूप "condemned" चाहिए था, और courtroom जैसा tone श्राप से मेल नहीं खाता। c) decreed: इसका मतलब है औपचारिक रूप से आदेश देना (जैसे राजा का decree), जो violate करता है क्योंकि यह neutral है, श्राप वाली सज़ा की भावना इसमें नहीं। d) cursed: इसका मतलब है श्राप देना जिससे कष्ट मिले, जो "by sage Mandavya" से match करता है — एक व्यक्ति द्वारा जानबूझकर दी गई सज़ा।

23. C) lineage

Blank (3) needs a noun for the family bloodline itself being wiped out. a) dynasty: means a ruling family's hold on power across generations (e.g., "the Mughal dynasty"), violating the requirement since it's about ruling power, while the sentence describes the family itself ending, not a throne being lost. b) ancestry: means the people you're descended from, looking backward (e.g., "tracing your ancestry"), violating the requirement since the sentence looks forward to destruction, not backward to origins. c) lineage: means the bloodline or family line as a continuing whole, matching "destruction of the Kaurava ____" as the family line itself ending. d) fraternity: means brotherhood or closeness among members (e.g., "a fraternity of soldiers"), violating the requirement since it's about bonding between the Kaurava brothers, not their bloodline.

In Hindi:

- Blank (3) में ऐसा noun चाहिए जो पूरी family bloodline के खत्म होने को दर्शाए। a) dynasty: इसका मतलब है पीढ़ियों तक सत्ता पर कब्ज़ा (जैसे "Mughal dynasty"), जो violate करता है क्योंकि यह सत्ता की बात है, जबकि sentence परिवार के ही खत्म होने की बात कर रहा है, गद्दी छिनने की नहीं। b) ancestry: इसका मतलब है आप किन लोगों से आए, यानी पीछे देखना (जैसे

"tracing your ancestry"), जो violate करता है क्योंकि sentence आगे विनाश की बात करता है, पीछे origin की नहीं। c) lineage: इसका मतलब है bloodline या family line खुद, एक चलती हुई चीज़ की तरह, जो "destruction of the Kaurava ____" से match करता है। d) fraternity: इसका मतलब है भाइयों के बीच अपनापन (जैसे "a fraternity of soldiers"), जो violate करता है क्योंकि यह Kaurava भाइयों की आपसी नज़दीकी की बात है, उनकी bloodline की नहीं।

24. A) **intervene**

Blank (4), coming after "did not," needs a base-form verb for stepping in to stop wrongdoing happening right in front of you. a) intervene: means stepping into an ongoing situation to stop it, matching the elders watching Draupadi's humiliation and doing nothing. b) interceded: means pleading on someone's behalf, close in meaning, but violating the requirement since "did not" needs the base form "intercede," not this past-tense form. c) interfere: means butting into a matter that isn't your business (usually unwelcome), violating the requirement since this negative shade doesn't fit an act that would have been the right thing to do. d) retaliate: means hitting back after being attacked (e.g., "retaliate against an insult"), violating the requirement since the elders weren't attacked, so there's nothing to retaliate against. In Hindi:

- Blank (4), जो "did not" के बाद आता है, में ऐसा base-form verb चाहिए जो सामने हो रहे गलत काम को रोकने के लिए बीच में आने को दर्शाए। a) intervene: इसका मतलब है चल रही घटना में बीच में आकर रोकना, जो elders के चुपचाप देखते रहने से match करता है। b) interceded: इसका मतलब है किसी की तरफ से गुज़ारिश करना, meaning करीब है, पर violate करता है क्योंकि "did not" के बाद base form "intercede" चाहिए था। c) interfere: इसका मतलब है बिना मतलब किसी मामले में टांग अड़ाना, जो violate करता है क्योंकि इसका negative भाव यहाँ फिट नहीं बैठता, जहाँ रोकना सही काम होता। d) retaliate: इसका मतलब है हमला होने पर पलटवार करना, जो violate करता है क्योंकि elders पर कोई हमला नहीं हुआ था।

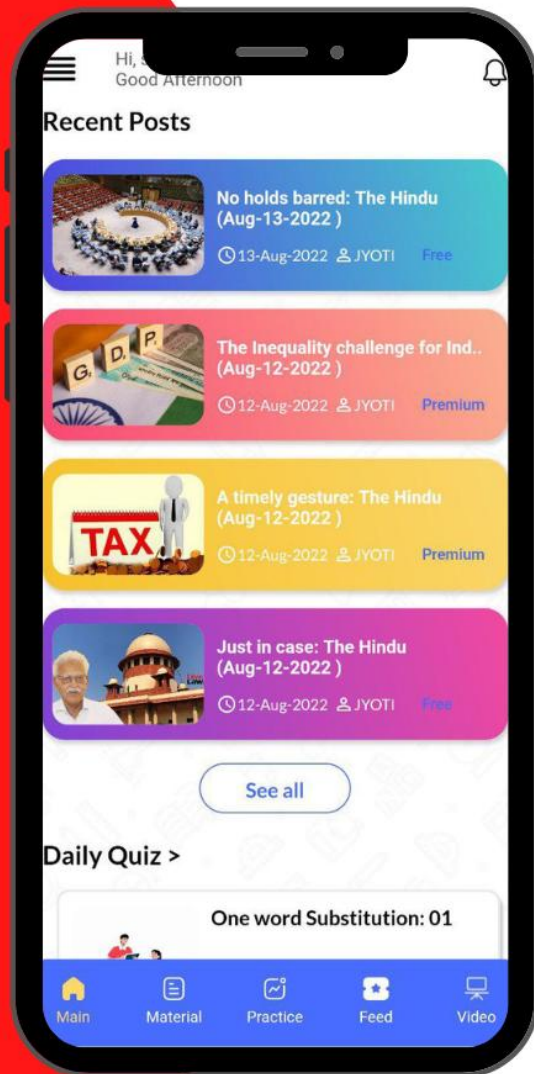
25. B) **declines**

Blank (5), in the form "He ____," needs a verb for calmly turning down an offer. a) forgo: means going without something you could have had, close in meaning, but violating the requirement since "He" needs "forgoes," not this bare form. b) declines: means politely saying no to an offer, matching Krishna's calm, respectful refusal of the Kauravas' hospitality. c) spurns: means rejecting something with visible scorn (e.g., "spurned his advances"), violating the requirement since this harsh tone doesn't fit Krishna's gentle character. d) eschews: means avoiding something as an ongoing principle (e.g., "eschews violence"), violating the requirement since it fits a standing habit, not this one specific moment.

In Hindi:

- Blank (5), जो "He ____" के रूप में है, में ऐसा verb चाहिए जो शांति से किसी प्रस्ताव को मना करने को दर्शाए। a) forgo: इसका मतलब है किसी चीज़ के बिना रह जाना, meaning करीब है, पर violate करता है क्योंकि "He" के साथ "forgoes" चाहिए, अकेला "forgo" नहीं। b) declines: इसका मतलब है विनम्रता से किसी प्रस्ताव को ना कहना, जो Krishna के शांत इनकार से match करता है। c) spurns: इसका मतलब है साफ बेइज़्ज़ती दिखाते हुए ठुकराना, जो violate करता है क्योंकि यह कठोर tone Krishna के सौम्य स्वभाव पर फिट नहीं बैठता। d) eschews: इसका

मतलब है किसी चीज़ को हमेशा के उसूल की तरह टालना, जो violate करता है क्योंकि यह एक स्थायी आदत पर फिट बैठता है, इस एक पल के इनकार पर नहीं।



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