The Hindu EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

13th May 2025

PREPARE FOR BANK (PO/ CLERK), SSC,UPSC, State PSC, CAT,CTET,RAILWAY EXAMS,CDS, TET, NDA/AIRFORCE, NET and all Govt. Exams

1. Unfettered (निर्बंध)

➔ **Meaning: Not confined or restricted; free.**

➔ **Synonyms: Unrestrained, unrestricted, unbound**

➔ **Antonyms: Restricted, confined, restrained**

➔ **Example: The research environment thrived due to the university's commitment to unfettered academic inquiry.**

2. Tutelage (संरक्षण / संरक्षण में शिक्षा)

➔ **Meaning: Protection of or authority over someone or something; instruction or guidance.**

➔ **Synonyms: Guardianship, instruction, mentorship**

➔ **Antonyms: Neglect, ignorance, abandonment**

➔ **Example: The university fell under bureaucratic tutelage, losing its freedom to shape academic policy.**

3. Catalysing (प्रेरित करना / उत्प्रेरित करना)

➔ **Meaning: Causing or accelerating a change or action.**

➔ **Synonyms: Triggering, sparking, stimulating**

➔ **Antonyms: Hindering, suppressing, delaying**

➔ **Example: Universities have historically played a role in catalysing social and political reform.**

4. Harrowing (दर्दनाक / भयानक)

➔ **Meaning: Acutely distressing or painful.**

➔ **Synonyms: Disturbing, traumatic, painful**

➔ **Antonyms: Pleasant, soothing, comforting**

➔ **Example: The harrowing images from hospitals during the pandemic shocked the entire nation.**

5. Rosier (अत्यधिक आशावादी)

➔ **Meaning: Seemingly more hopeful, optimistic, or positive than warranted.**

➔ **Synonyms: Optimistic, cheerful, hopeful**

➔ **Antonyms: Gloomy, pessimistic, bleak**

➔ **Example: The government tried to present a rosier picture of the pandemic response despite the grim reality.**

6. Gratuitous (अनावश्यक / अनावश्यक रूप से दिया गया)

➜ **Meaning: Given or done without a valid reason, justification, or necessity; uncalled for.**

➜ **Synonyms: Unnecessary, unwarranted, unprovoked, superfluous**

➜ **Antonyms: Necessary, justified, warranted, essential**

➜ **Example: The professor's gratuitous criticism of the student's appearance was both rude and irrelevant.**

7. Cachet (प्रतिष्ठा / विशिष्टता)

➜ **Meaning: The state of being respected or admired; a mark or quality of distinction or prestige.**

➜ **Synonyms: Prestige, status, distinction, reputation**

➜ **Antonyms: Disrepute, obscurity, insignificance, disgrace**

➜ **Example: Winning a Nobel Prize carries a certain cachet that few other awards can match.**

8. Dextrous (कुशल / चतुर)

➔ **Meaning: Showing skill, especially with the hands; demonstrating cleverness or mental agility.**

➔ **Synonyms: Skillful, adept, nimble, agile, deft**

➔ **Antonyms: Clumsy, awkward, inept, unskilled**

➔ **Example: The artisan was so dextrous that he could carve intricate patterns with his eyes closed.**

9. Ubiquitous (सर्वव्यापी)

➔ **Meaning: Present, appearing, or found everywhere**

➔ **Synonyms: Omnipresent, universal, pervasive**

➔ **Antonyms: Rare, uncommon, limited**

➔ **Example: Satellite technologies have become ubiquitous in modern communication systems.**

10. Staggering (चौंका देने वाला)

➔ **Meaning: Deeply shocking; astonishing in scale or impact.**

➔ **Synonyms: Astounding, overwhelming, shocking**

➔ **Antonyms: Ordinary, predictable, mild**

➔ **Example: The staggering death toll contradicted the official figures during the pandemic.**

One-word substitute:

1. Lasting for a very short time:
Ephemeral

2. To clear from blame or wrongdoing:
Exonerate

3. Sociable and fond of company:
Gregarious

4. Impossible to remove, forget, or erase:
Indelible

Phrasal Verbs:

1. Break down
Meaning: To stop functioning or fail. It can also mean to analyze something into smaller parts or to become emotionally distressed.

2. Get back
Meaning: To return to a place or regain possession of something.

3. Go off
Meaning: To explode, make a loud noise, or stop functioning. It can also mean to leave suddenly or to become worse.

4. Run away
Meaning: To escape or leave a place or situation, often secretly or suddenly.

Idioms & Phrases

1. A little learning is a dangerous thing
Meaning: people who don't understand something fully are dangerous

2. A snowball effect
Meaning: a situation in which something increases in size or importance at a faster and faster rate

3. A snowball's chance in hell
Meaning: no chance at all

4. A stitch in time saves nine

Meaning: fix the problem now because it will get worse later

5. A storm in a teacup

Meaning: a big fuss about a small problem

Article for Reading

A belated admission: On the undercount of India's COVID-19 pandemic deaths

It has been four years since the delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus hit India. The country bore the brunt of the pandemic's devastating impact, with harrowing scenes of overwhelmed health-care systems, oxygen-supply shortages and even bodies floating in the Ganga in Uttar Pradesh. Reports based on data sourced from the Civil Registration System through RTIs and other means, by The Hindu in particular, besides independent surveys, showed that the toll was clearly staggering and in millions, much more than the official tally. The government's response was defensive and dismissive; the attempt was to consistently undermine the findings. After maintaining that the reported number of COVID-19 deaths during this period was accurate, the government, through the Registrar General of India, released a report last week that showed that there were 21.5 lakh excess deaths in 2021 as against 3.32 lakh reported COVID-19 deaths.

During a pandemic, the bulk of these excess deaths must have been related to the effects of the disease. Besides, lockdown restrictions had resulted in lower fatalities due to causes such as road accidents. The high number of excess deaths was estimated by The Hindu's calculations to be nearly 6.5 times more than the reported deaths. The fact that this multiple was even higher for Gujarat (44.2), Madhya Pradesh (19.5),Uttar Pradesh (19.5) and Telangana (18.2) suggests that COVID-19 deaths were under-reported significantly in 2021. These were largely due to the fact that deaths due to comorbidities were perhaps not considered as COVID-19 deaths or because those numbers were suppressed in order to paint a rosier picture of the government's response to the pandemic. The nearly four-year delay in releasing this report, alongside the Sample Registration System Report for 2021, reveals the Union government's reluctance to comprehensively assess the pandemic's true impact and its casual approach to publishing critical demographic data.

This reluctance in publishing timely information coincides with the fact that India's civil registration system that tracks births and deaths has become more robust over time with most States reporting the bulk of the deaths that occur, either in institutions such as hospitals or at homes. In some States, this reporting happens with a lag when compared to others, but it is encouraging that registration levels are getting better. But medical certification of the causes of the deaths still remains low when compared to other developing countries such as Brazil. A robust maintenance of registration and certification records is important for public health tools. The delay in release of vital data defeats the purpose of the improvements made in civil registration. Data delayed is also data denied.

Summary

The passage discusses the delayed acknowledgment by the Indian government of the actual death toll during the 2021 Delta variant wave of COVID-19. Despite earlier official figures reporting 3.32 lakh COVID-19 deaths, a recent report by the Registrar General of India revealed 21.5 lakh excess deaths that year. Investigative reports and independent surveys, especially by The Hindu, had long pointed out this vast undercount. Some states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Telangana showed extreme under-reporting, with excess deaths far exceeding the official COVID-19 death figures. The government's delay in releasing the data and its initial defensive stance reflect a reluctance to confront the pandemic's true impact. While civil registration systems have improved, the lack of timely release and weak cause-of-death certification undermine public health monitoring. The passage emphasizes that delaying such data amounts to denying it.

Tone:

Critical – The passage sharply critiques the government's defensive stance, data suppression, and delay in releasing vital statistics.

Analytical – It uses data comparisons and references to reports to support its points.

Concerned – Expresses worry about the implications for public health and governance.

Reading Comprehension

Based on the above passage, answer the following questions:

Question 1:
What does the Registrar General of India's recently released report from 2021 reveal?

A. India successfully minimized COVID-related mortality through early intervention
B. The reported number of COVID deaths was grossly underestimated
C. India's excess death count matched global averages
D. Lockdown measures worsened the death toll
E. None of the above

Question 2:
Which of the following best describes the government's attitude toward independent death estimates during the pandemic?

A. Supportive and cooperative in updating official data
B. Apathetic but willing to investigate further
C. Defensive and dismissive of findings by independent sources
D. Transparent but limited by technical constraints
E. None of the above

Question 3:
Why does the author emphasize the importance of timely release of civil registration data?

A. Because international health agencies require annual reporting
B. Because delays affect the credibility of hospital-level statistics
C. Because states with poor data cause embarrassment on global platforms
D. Because data delayed is functionally equivalent to data denied
E. None of the above

Article for Skimming

The educational landscape, its disconcerting shift

Education has historically been regarded as the cornerstone of societal advancement — a realm where critical thinking, free inquiry, and the pursuit of knowledge could flourish. At its best, higher education had always cultivated intellectual independence, nurtured dissent, and inspired progress across disciplines and societies. The boundaries of human understanding were continually pushed through unfettered dialogue and academic exploration. Yet, in recent decades, the educational landscape, especially within universities, has undergone a profound and disconcerting shift. Institutions once celebrated for fostering independent thought now appear increasingly constrained by bureaucratic controls, external mandates, and ideological gatekeeping. Rather than serving as laboratories of innovation and resistance, the Canadian thinker, H.A. Giroux, sees universities becoming engines of conformity, prioritising managerial efficiency and market alignment over academic freedom and intellectual integrity. Indoctrination, intimidation and intolerance become the central ingredients of education.

A particularly disquieting development in this decline is the unyielding centralisation of academic curricula. In the past, universities enjoyed considerable autonomy to craft syllabi tailored to their students' needs, faculty expertise, and the shifting contours of intellectual inquiry. Today, however, this independence is steadily eroding. Centralised agencies — be they governmental bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) or frameworks such as the National Education Policy (NEP) — increasingly dictate the structure and content of academic programmes. These prescriptions are often influenced not by academic merit or pedagogical philosophy, but by economic agendas. The UGC, originally intended to coordinate academic standards, has mutated into an instrument of control. It dictates appointments, interferes in administration, and shapes curricula, often with scant regard for academic judgement, thereby becoming the long arm of a state increasingly intolerant of independent or critical thinking. Let us be clear: this is not about standards — it is about submission.

Under the guise of regulation, the UGC has eroded the autonomy of Indian universities to the point of extinction. The promise of self-governance has been replaced with bureaucratic tutelage. An institution that is stripped of autonomy in faculty selection, research direction, and protection of dissent ceases to be a university in any meaningful sense. The consequences of this centralisation are far-reaching. It undercuts not only academic autonomy but also produces compliant drones, regiments intellectual discourse, and marginalises alternative perspectives. When syllabi are standardised across regions and institutions, the intellectual ecosystem becomes monolithic — devoid of diversity, nuance, or radical innovation. This intellectual flattening not only stifles creativity but also discourages the interrogation of dominant narratives and received assumptions.

Question 4:
According to the author, what has replaced the spirit of intellectual independence in universities?

A. Enhanced interdisciplinary research and digital innovation
B. Bureaucratic control and ideological conformity
C. Decentralised syllabi design and faculty-led governance
D. Economic liberalisation and global competitiveness
E. None of the above

Question 5:
What consequence does the author predict from standardising syllabi across institutions?

A. Increased uniformity in teaching quality
B. Reduction in educational disparities between regions
C. Intellectual monotony and loss of critical inquiry
D. Greater innovation in academic disciplines
E. None of the above

Today's Descriptive Question

Precis Writing:

Original Text:

Poverty remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges in India, affecting millions of people despite significant economic progress. It refers to a condition where individuals lack the necessary resources to meet their basic needs, including food, shelter, healthcare, and education. India, with its large and diverse population, faces a complex mix of rural and urban poverty, influenced by factors such as unemployment, inadequate access to education, and socio-economic inequalities. The causes of poverty in India are multifaceted. Rapid population growth, limited job opportunities, and lack of proper education hinder economic mobility. The rural population, primarily dependent on agriculture, suffers from low productivity, lack of modern technology, and climate-related uncertainties, which exacerbate poverty levels. In urban areas, unorganized labor, underemployment, and rising living costs contribute to economic hardships. Historical factors such as colonial exploitation, social inequalities, and caste-based discrimination have also played a role in perpetuating poverty.

The Indian government has implemented several poverty alleviation programs, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which provides wage employment, and the Public Distribution System (PDS), which ensures subsidized food for the poor. Initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and Aatmanirbhar Bharat aim to promote financial inclusion and self-reliance. Furthermore, skill development programs and rural development schemes have been introduced to enhance employment opportunities. While these measures have led to a decline in poverty rates, challenges persist, including corruption, inefficient policy implementation, and income disparity. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities, pushing millions back into poverty. A comprehensive approach focusing on education, healthcare, employment generation, and social welfare is necessary for sustainable poverty reduction. Ensuring inclusive growth, technological advancements in agriculture and industry, and equitable wealth distribution can help India overcome poverty and achieve long-term economic stability.

Precis:

Poverty in India remains a major challenge, affecting millions due to unemployment, lack of education, and economic disparities. Rural poverty is driven by low agricultural productivity, while urban poverty results from underemployment and high living costs. Historical factors have further deepened economic inequality.

The government has launched various programs like MGNREGA, PDS, and PMJDY to provide employment, subsidized food, and financial inclusion. While these efforts have reduced poverty, challenges such as policy inefficiencies and economic disparity persist. A comprehensive strategy focusing on education, employment, and inclusive growth is crucial to achieving sustainable poverty eradication.

- **Your company is relocating to a new office. Write an email informing all employees about the change in address, the moving date, and any necessary instructions.**

To: ……………..@gmail.com

Subject: Important: Office Relocation Announcement

Dear Team,

We are excited to inform you that our company is relocating to a new office! This move marks a significant milestone for us, and we look forward to working in a more spacious and modern environment.

New Office Address:
[New Office Address]

Moving Date:
[Moving Date]

To ensure a smooth transition, please take note of the following instructions:

Last Working Day at Current Office: [Last Working Day]
Packing Guidelines: [Brief packing instructions if applicable]
IT & Equipment Setup: [Any relevant IT setup details]
First Working Day at New Office: [First Working Day at New Location]
Should you have any questions or require assistance, please reach out to [Contact Person/Department]. We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to welcoming you to our new office!

Best regards,
[Your Name]
[Your Position]
[Company Name]

Match the column

1. A little learning is a dangerous thing
2. A snowball effect
3. A snowball's chance in hell
4. A stitch in time saves nine
5. A storm in a teacup

A. fix the problem now
B. no chance at all
C. a big fuss about a small problem
D. people who don't understand something fully are dangerous
E. a situation in which something increases in
   size or importance at a faster and faster rate

Answer:
1-d
2-e
3-b
4-a
5-c

Vocabulary

1. Unfettered:
2. Tutelage:
3. Catalysing:
4. Harrowing:
5. Rosier:
6. Gratuitous:
7. Cachet:
8. Dextrous:
9. Ubiquitous:
10. Staggering:

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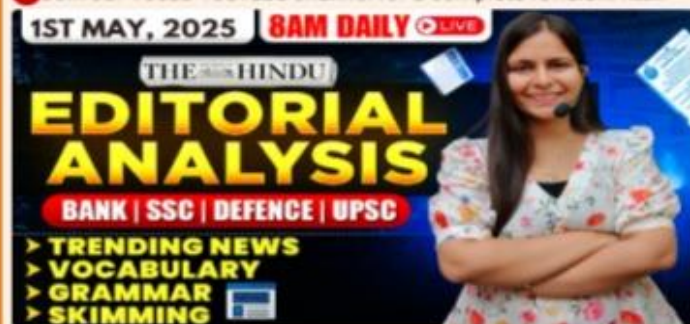
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Rc ans

1.

Ans: B

Explanation:

The passage states:

"...the government... released a report last week that showed that there were 21.5 lakh excess deaths in 2021 as against 3.32 lakh reported COVID-19 deaths."

Incorrect options

A. No such claim of successful early intervention is made.

C. No comparison with global averages is mentioned.

D. The lockdown reduced fatalities from non-COVID causes like accidents, not worsened the toll.

2.

Ans: C

Explanation:

The passage explicitly says:

"The government's response was defensive and dismissive; the attempt was to consistently undermine the findings."

Incorrect options:

A. There's no indication of support or cooperation.

B. The government wasn't willing to investigate, as per the tone of the passage.

D. Transparency is lacking; the delay and suppression contradict this.

3.

Ans: D

Explanation:

This is directly stated in the last line:

"Data delayed is also data denied."

Incorrect options:

A. No mention of international agency requirements.

B. Hospital-level statistics are not discussed specifically.

C. There's no claim about embarrassment on global platforms.

4.

Ans: B

Explanation:

The author criticises the current state of universities, saying they are "constrained by bureaucratic controls, external mandates, and ideological gatekeeping" and have become "engines of conformity" prioritising market alignment over academic freedom.

Incorrect options:

A. Digital innovation and research are not mentioned as replacements.

C. The opposite is said — syllabi are centralised, not decentralised.

D. Economic agendas are critiqued, not praised.

5.

Ans: C

Explanation:

The author writes that "the intellectual ecosystem becomes monolithic — devoid of diversity, nuance, or radical innovation", which results in stifled creativity and the discouragement of challenging dominant narratives.

Incorrect options:

A. Uniformity isn't necessarily linked to improved quality in the passage.

B. The author sees standardisation as problematic, not as a way to reduce disparities.

D. The opposite is argued — innovation is stifled, not fostered.