

READING COMPREHENSION**DPP-I-A (BASIC)**

Directions (Q. 1-7): Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

India's economic fortunes continue to be tied to the sharply **fluctuating** price of oil. At a gathering of prominent oil ministers in New Delhi on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged oil-producing countries to reduce the cost of energy in order to aid the global economy in its path towards recovery. Mr. Modi also called for a review of payment terms, demanding the partial use of the rupee instead of the U.S. dollar to pay for oil, in order to ease the burden on oil-importing countries in the wake of the strengthening of the dollar. With well over 80% of its oil demand being met through imports, India clearly has a lot at stake as oil prices have risen by as much as 70% in rupee terms in the last one year. Notably, speaking at the same event, Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Khalid A. Al-Falih refused to openly commit to lower oil prices, opting instead to say that the price of oil could have been much higher but for the efforts taken by his country to boost supply. This is not surprising given the absence of significant rival suppliers in the global oil market willing to help out India.

India's policymakers now face the difficult task of safely steering the economy in the midst of multiple external headwinds. For one, the current account deficit widened to 2.4% of gross domestic product in the first quarter of 2018-19 and is expected to reach 3% for the full year. The rupee, which is down about 16% since the beginning of the year, doesn't seem to be showing any signs of recovery either. Further, the growth in the sales of petrol and diesel has already been affected adversely as their prices have shot through the roof. All this will likely weigh negatively on the prospects of the Indian economy, the world's fastest-growing, in the coming quarters. In this scenario, the decision to marginally cut taxes imposed on domestic fuels is unlikely to be of any significant help to consumers. What is required is a steep cut in Central and State taxes for the benefit to carry through to the consumers, which, of course, is unlikely given the government's fiscal needs. Another long-term solution to the oil problem will be to increasingly tap into domestic sources of energy supply while simultaneously encouraging consumers to switch to green alternatives. This will require a stronger policy framework and implementation. In the short term, the government could look to diversifying its international supplier base to manage shocks better. But such a choice carries geopolitical risks, such as in the case of Iran. Since it will take a length of time to wean the economy off oil imports, policymakers should also be willing to think beyond just the next election if India's over-reliance on oil is to come to an end for good.

1. Which among the following correctly explains the opinion of the Oil Minister of Saudi Arabia regarding the increasing oil prices in the international market?
 - (a) The Oil Minister of Saudi Arabia is of the opinion that no other country is complaining regarding the increasing oil prices in the international market and India should not complain.
 - (b) There is no other solution available to Saudi Arabia apart from increasing the prices of oil so that it can fund its war expenses.
 - (c) There is the notion among US and its allies that Saudi Arabia can always cut down on the oil prices but it is not doing so.
 - (d) There is no chance that oil prices will come down in the near future and actually everybody should thank Saudi Arabia that the oil prices are not higher than the present rates.
 - (e) India is an ally of Saudi Arabia for a long time now and the country will give discount to India in the future.
2. Which among the following is the reason that India is very much concerned with the oil prices in the international market?
 - (a) India is a leading producer of oil and also a leading economy in the country thereby it should have stronghold over the dynamics of the global oil prices.
 - (b) The global oil prices should not be more than that in India and that is why India must know the prices prevailing in the international market.
 - (c) India imports the majority of its oil demand and that is why the prices in the international market affect the economy of the country.
 - (d) There is always the option that India can opt to sell its oil blocks to the countries that want to come and do business in India.
 - (e) None of the above

3. Which among the following is correct regarding the requests made by the Prime Minister of India in the meeting of the Oil Ministers in New Delhi, as described in the passage?
- The Prime Minister requested that India should be made to wait for more oil supply so that India can tap on the domestic resources for production of oil.
 - The Prime Minister requested that the Indian Oil Companies should be given proper training in order to produce more oil from the domestic sources.
 - The Prime Minister requested that the suppliers of oil should allow India to make a part of its payment in the domestic currency in order to avert the fluctuations in the exchange rate.
 - The Prime Minister requested that the cost of oil should be reduced in order to make energy affordable in the world.
 - Both C and D
4. Which among the following is a long-term solution offered by the author in order to address the energy supply related issues prevailing in India?
- The government should open more oil exploration companies so that there is no competition and everybody should be able to make profits.
 - The government should focus on ensuring that there is no oil supply from the foreign countries in order to ensure that nobody is making any loss.
 - India should focus on exploring the domestic resources for oil available in the country as imports are creating all the issues.
 - India should try to diversify its supply base since more countries should be added in the list of suppliers to the country.
 - Both C and D
5. Which among the following is a short-term step that should be taken by the government in order to address the issues regarding oil supply in the country?
- There should be a separate ministry to address the issues pertaining to the oil and petroleum products in the country so that there is no burden on any other ministry.
 - The government should try to engage more countries for exports from the country so that it can strike deals for import of oil from all such countries.
 - It is important to note that the government has announced to cut down the taxes on the valuable items so that price of oil can be increased.
 - The government should have more oil suppliers to the country so that there is no dearth of options in front of the government.
 - All the above
6. Which among the following is similar in meaning to the word Wean as used in the passage?
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|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| (a) Improve | (b) Improvise | (c) Declare |
| (d) Rectify | (e) None of above | |
7. Which among the following is opposite in meaning to the word Fluctuating as used in the passage?
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| (a) Stable | (b) Continental | (c) Oscillating |
| (d) Astounding | (e) None of the above | |

Directions (Q. 8-12): Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

The oceans are so vast and deep that until fairly recently, it was widely assumed that no matter how much trash and chemicals humans dumped into them, the effects would be negligible. Proponents of dumping in the oceans even had a catchphrase: "The solution to pollution is dilution."

Today, we need look no further than the New Jersey-size dead zone that forms each summer in the Mississippi River Delta, or the thousand-mile-wide swath of decomposing plastic in the northern Pacific Ocean to see that this "dilution" policy has helped place a once flourishing ocean ecosystem on the brink of collapse.

There is evidence that the oceans have suffered at the hands of mankind for millennia, as far back as Roman times. But recent studies show that degradation, particularly of shoreline areas, has accelerated dramatically in the past three centuries as industrial discharge and runoff from farms and coastal cities has increased.

Pollution is the introduction of harmful contaminants that are outside the norm for a given ecosystem. Common man-made pollutants that reach the ocean include pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, detergents, oil, sewage, plastics, and other solids. Many of these pollutants collect at the ocean's depths, where they are consumed by small marine organisms and introduced into the global food chain. Scientists are even discovering that pharmaceuticals ingested by humans but not fully processed by our bodies are eventually ending up in the fish we eat.

Many ocean pollutants are released into the environment far upstream from coastlines. Nitrogen-rich fertilizers applied by farmers inland, for example, end up in local streams, rivers, and groundwater and are eventually deposited in estuaries, bays, and deltas. These excess nutrients can spawn massive blooms of algae that rob the water of oxygen, leaving areas where little or no marine life can exist. Scientists have counted some 400 such dead zones around the world.

Solid wastes like bags, foam, and other items dumped into the oceans from land or by ships at sea are frequently consumed, with often fatal effects, by marine mammals, fish, and birds that mistake it for food. Discarded fishing nets drift for years, ensnaring fish and mammals. In certain regions, ocean currents corral trillions of decomposing plastic items and other trash into gigantic, swirling garbage patches.

Pollution is not always physical. In large bodies of water, sound waves can carry undiminished for miles. The increased presence of loud or persistent sounds from ships, sonar devices, oil rigs, and even from natural sources like earthquakes can disrupt the migration, communication, hunting, and reproduction patterns of many marine animals, particularly aquatic mammals like whales and dolphins.

8. Which of the following is the reason for degradation of shore lines of oceans as per the passage?
- Industrial waste
 - Migration from coastal cities
 - Hunting of Aquatic animals
- (a) Only I (b) Only I and II
(c) Only III (d) Only II and III
(e) Only I, II and III
9. Which of the following statement/s is/are not true in the context of passage?
- Marine pollution is the resultant of physical pollution only.
 - Plastic bags, foams etc. are rarely consumed by aquatic animals.
 - The earthquakes can disturb lifestyle and behavior pattern of aquatic mammals.
- (a) Only I and III (b) Only III
(c) Only II and III (d) Only I and II
(e) None of these
10. Which of the following is/are a source of solid waste?
- (a) Pesticides (b) Plastics
(c) Organic fertilizers (d) Only (A) and (B)
(e) Only (B) and (C)
11. As per the passage, how do nitrogen-rich fertilizers contribute to marine pollution?
- (a) By releasing chemicals in the water.
(b) By absorbing all the oxygen from water, making it near impossible for any marine life to dwell.
(c) By raising nitrogen levels in the sea.
(d) All of the above.
(e) None of the above.
12. Which of the following is/are true as per the passage?
- Dilution is the key to control pollution.
 - Pollution can make changes in the hunting, migration and communication pattern of dolphins.
 - Solid wastes have fatal effects on marine animals.
- (a) Only I (b) Only II
(c) Only II and III (d) All of the above
(e) Either I or III

Directions (Q. 13-19): Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

In a recent discussion paper, NITI Aayog has chalked out an ambitious strategy for India to become an artificial intelligence (AI) powerhouse. AI is the use of computers to make decisions that are normally made by humans. Many forms of AI surround Indians already, including chatbots on retail websites and programs that flag fraudulent bank activity. But NITI Aayog envisions AI solutions for India on a scale not seen anywhere in the world today, especially in five key sectors – agriculture, healthcare, education, smart cities and infrastructure, and transport. In agriculture, for example, machines will provide information to farmers on the quality of soil, when to sow, where to spray herbicide, and when to expect pest infestations. It's an idea with great potential: India has 30 million farmers with smartphones, but poor extension services. If computers help agricultural universities advise farmers on best practices, India could see a farming revolution.

However, there are formidable obstacles. AI start-ups already offer some solutions, but the challenge lies in scaling these to cover the entire value chain, as NITI Aayog envisions. The first problem is data. Machine learning, the set of technologies used to create AI, is a data-guzzling monster. It takes reams of historical data as input, identifies the relationships among data elements, and makes predictions. More sophisticated forms of machine learning, like "deep learning", attempt to mimic the human brain. And even though they promise greater accuracy, they also need more data than what is required by traditional machine learning. Unfortunately, India has sparse data in sectors like agriculture, and this is already hampering AI-based businesses today.

In fact, the lack of data means that deep learning doesn't work for all companies in India. One example is Climate-Connect, a Delhi-based firm, which uses AI to predict the amount of power a solar plant will generate every 15 minutes. This is critical because solar electricity generation can change dramatically every hour depending on weather conditions and the position of the sun. When this happens, the plant must communicate expected changes to power distributors, which will then switch to alternative sources. With India planning to install 100 GW of solar power by 2022, such AI will play a central role in power planning.

But to generate such data, Climate-Connect needs historical inputs like the time of sunrise and sunset, and cloud cover where the plant is located. Unfortunately, since most Indian solar plants are recent, data are available only for a couple of years, whereas deep learning needs data over many years to predict generation. Today, the firm uses traditional machine learning technologies such as regression analysis that work with less data. These methods have an accuracy of around 95%. While deep learning can boost accuracy for operations such as Climate-Connect, it hasn't worked very well in the Indian scenario, says Nitin Tanwar, cofounder of the firm.

Another problem for AI firms today is finding the right people. NITI Aayog's report has bleak news: only about 50 Indian scientists carry out "serious research" and they are concentrated in elite institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institutes of Science. Meanwhile, only about 4% of AI professionals have worked in emerging technologies like deep learning. A survey of LinkedIn found 386 out of the 22,000 people with PhDs in AI across the world to be Indians. How does this skill gap impact companies? To some extent, open libraries of machine learning code, which can be customised to solve Indian problems, help. This means that companies need not write code from scratch, and even computer science graduates can carry out the customisation.

13. Which of the following is/are synonym/s of the word bleak?

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| I. Depressing | II. Dismal |
| III. Congenial | IV. Stark |
| (a) Only III | (b) Only I and III |
| (c) Only I, II and IV | (d) Only II, III and IV |
| (e) Only I, II and III | |

14. Which of the following is/are antonym/s of the word sparse?

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| I. Scant | II. Few |
| III. Sporadic | IV. Abundant |
| (a) Only II | (b) Only IV |
| (c) Only I, II and IV | (d) Only I, II and III |
| (e) Only II, III and IV | |

