





THE HINDU EDITORIAL ANALYSIS





Vocabulary

1. PULL BACK (Phrasal Verb)

Meaning: To withdraw from a situation or position; to retreat from an advance or commitment

Synonyms: Withdraw, Retreat, Step back, Disengage, Back off, Recede, Recoil

Antonyms: Advance, Push forward, Engage, Commit, Proceed, Escalate, Press on

Example: After suffering heavy losses the battalion was ordered to pull back and regroup at a safer position.

2. TAILING (Verb)

Meaning: Following someone closely and persistently; here used figuratively as blindly following another's lead

Synonyms: Following, Shadowing, Trailing, Pursuing, Tracking, Accompanying, Tagging along

Antonyms: Leading, Guiding, Directing, Preceding, Initiating, Commanding, Pioneering

Example: The junior minister was criticised for simply tailing the senior leader's decisions without independent judgment.

3. RECKLESS WAR (Phrase)

Meaning: A war launched without proper justification, planning, or regard for consequences; an irresponsible and dangerous military conflict

Synonyms: Unnecessary war, Unjustified conflict, Irresponsible military action, Foolhardy war, Ill-conceived war, Impulsive conflict, Adventurist war

Antonyms: Justified war, Defensive conflict, Calculated military action, Responsible intervention, Proportionate response, Necessary war

Example: Historians have described the invasion as a reckless war that destabilised an entire region for decades without achieving any of its stated objectives.

4. ASSASSINATION (Noun)

Meaning: The targeted killing of a prominent person especially for political reasons

Synonyms: Murder, Killing, Elimination, Execution, Liquidation, Slaying, Termination

Antonyms: Protection, Preservation, Rescue, Safeguarding, Defence, Security, Survival

Example: The assassination of the prime minister plunged the nation into a prolonged period of political uncertainty.

5. DEFIANCE (Noun)

Meaning: Open resistance or bold disobedience toward authority or opposition

Synonyms: Resistance, Rebellion, Disobedience, Insubordination, Boldness, Opposition, Audacity

Antonyms: Submission, Compliance, Surrender, Obedience, Yielding, Acceptance, Capitulation

Example: The protesters stood in defiance of the government's order to disperse raising their banners high.

6. CLERICAL (Adjective)

Meaning: Relating to the clergy or religious leadership; pertaining to rule or authority by religious figures

Synonyms: Religious, Ecclesiastical, Priestly, Theocratic, Ministerial, Sacerdotal, Pastoral

Antonyms: Secular, Lay, Civil, Democratic, Non-religious, Temporal, Worldly

Example: The country's constitution was amended to reduce the influence of clerical authority in legislative matters.

7. SEMINARIES (Noun)

Meaning: Colleges or institutions for the training of priests, ministers, or religious scholars

Synonyms: Theological colleges, Religious schools, Divinity schools, Clerical institutions, Madrasas, Religious academies, Monasteries

Antonyms: Secular universities, Public schools, Lay institutions, Non-religious colleges, Civil academies

Example: He spent twelve years studying Islamic jurisprudence in the ancient seminaries of the holy city.

8. DECAPITATION (Noun)

Meaning: The removal of a head; here used figuratively as the targeted elimination of a state's top leadership

Synonyms: Beheading, Leadership elimination, Top-level targeting, Removal of leadership, Neutralisation, Decapitation strike, Targeted killing

Antonyms: Empowerment, Installation, Appointment, Elevation, Establishment, Strengthening of leadership

Example: Military strategists have long debated whether decapitation strikes against enemy leadership actually destabilise states or simply harden resistance.

9. CLERGY (Noun)

Meaning: The body of ordained religious leaders or priests in a religion

Synonyms: Priests, Ministers, Clerics, Religious leaders, Pastors, Ecclesiastics, Preachers

Antonyms: Laity, Civilians, Secular public, Non-clergy, Common people, Congregation, Laypeople

Example: The new government pledged to limit the political influence of the clergy in matters of public policy.

10. SOARING (Verb/Adjective)

Meaning: Rising rapidly and dramatically to a high level

Synonyms: Skyrocketing, Surging, Escalating, Climbing, Rising sharply, Shooting up, Spiralling upward

Antonyms: Plummeting, Falling, Declining, Dropping, Collapsing, Decreasing, Crashing

Example: Soaring food prices forced millions of low-income families to cut back on essential nutrition.

11. GOALPOSTS (Noun)

Meaning: The posts marking the goals in a game; here used figuratively as the objectives or conditions being set in a situation

Synonyms: Objectives, Targets, Conditions, Parameters, Benchmarks, Standards, Criteria

Antonyms: Fixed terms, Unchanging conditions, Settled objectives, Stable targets, Consistent standards

Example: Constantly shifting the goalposts during contract negotiations frustrated the investors and delayed the project.

12. OVERTHROW (Verb/Noun)

Meaning: To remove a government or leader from power by force or political action

Synonyms: Topple, Oust, Depose, Remove, Unseat, Dislodge, Subvert

Antonyms: Establish, Install, Support, Maintain, Uphold, Preserve, Sustain

Example: The military coup attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government overnight.

13. POUND (Verb)

Meaning: To strike heavily and repeatedly; here used as continuously bombing a target with great force

Synonyms: Bombard, Batter, Strike, Pummel, Hammer, Assault, Besiege

Antonyms: Protect, Defend, Shield, Guard, Spare, Cease, Withdraw

Example: Artillery units continued to pound the fortified positions for several hours before the infantry advanced.

14. GRAVE (Adjective)

Meaning: Giving cause for alarm or concern; extremely serious in nature

Synonyms: Serious, Severe, Critical, Solemn, Dire, Alarming, Weighty

Antonyms: Trivial, Minor, Insignificant, Light, Mild, Unimportant, Negligible

Example: The audit committee expressed grave concerns about the company's financial irregularities during the annual review.

Tone:

The tone of the passage is sharply critical and unflinchingly direct. Unlike earlier editorials that balanced criticism with constructive suggestions, this piece makes no attempt at measured restraint. The author is openly contemptuous of the war and its architects — words and phrases like **"wholly unnecessary"**, **"strategic blunder"**, **"grave miscalculation"**, and **"reckless war"** leave no room for ambiguity. The rhetorical question — **"what is the point of continuing to bomb a people whom the Americans promised to liberate"** — captures the tone perfectly. It is not just critical but almost prosecutorial, presenting the case against the war as if building toward an unavoidable verdict.

Theme

The central theme is the catastrophic strategic failure of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran and the urgent necessity of ending it immediately. The author's core argument is that the war was built on a fundamental miscalculation — that killing Iran's Supreme Leader would collapse the Islamic Republic. Instead the opposite has happened. Iran has signalled defiance, unified its institutions, appointed a new Supreme Leader, and regionalised the conflict.

A strong secondary theme is the absence of coherent political objectives as the defining failure of this war. Trump's shifting goalposts — from demanding Iran's overthrow to claiming victory within eleven days — reveal a war launched without a clear end game. The author's final argument is the passage's most powerful — when military force serves no clearly achievable political purpose and the target refuses to fold, the only rational course is to stop.

Strategic blunder: On the U.S., the Iran war

The U.S. must pull back instead of tailing Israel in this reckless war

By picking Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei as the Supreme Leader, after the assassination of his father Ali Khamenei in a joint U.S.-Israeli strike on February 28, Iran has signalled defiance and continuity. Last week, U.S. President Donald Trump, who demanded Iran's "unconditional surrender", made it clear that the younger Khamenei was unacceptable to him. But Iran's Assembly of Experts, the 88-member clerical body, chose the 57-year-old ayatollah, who also lost other close family members in the February 28 strike, as the new "leader of the revolution". Having fought "on the frontlines" of the Iran-Iraq war and studied Islam in the seminaries of Qom, Mojtaba Khamenei has maintained close ties with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the clerical establishment. By elevating him, Tehran has sent an unmistakable message: the Islamic Republic stands firm despite the war. If Mr. Trump believed that his initial decapitation strike would lead to the Islamic state's collapse, he was mistaken. Instead, all branches of the state rallied behind the military and the clergy, while Iran regionalised the war by attacking U.S. bases and energy infrastructure in the Persian Gulf as well as Israel. Now, a new Khamenei is in power; the Iranian state is far from collapsing; energy prices are soaring and leaders in the U.S. and Israel are searching for exit strategies.

This was a wholly unnecessary war. Israel and the U.S. began attacking Iran hours after Oman, which mediated talks between Tehran and Washington, had said that a nuclear deal was within reach. After the war began, Mr. Trump kept shifting the goalposts. On day one, he said the overthrow of the Iranian state was his objective; by the fifth day, he said he wanted to be involved in selecting Iran's new leader, and by the eleventh day, he declared that America had already won and that the war would be over "soon", even as Iranian missiles continued to rain down on Israel and target U.S. bases in the region. To be sure, the U.S. and Israel possess immense air power and can continue to pound Iran. Independent investigations have found that American missiles struck a girls' school in Iran on February 28, claiming over 160 lives. Last week, Israeli strikes on Iran's oil storage facilities enveloped Tehran in thick smoke. But what is the point of continuing to bomb a people whom the Americans promised to "liberate" until a few days ago, without clearly achievable political goals? The Iranian state is not folding, it is fighting back. If Mr. Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu continue this war, the global economy will come under even greater stress. Whether they realise their grave miscalculation or not, the way forward is not more bombing. This war must be brought to an end immediately.

Writer's point of view

The writer is a sharp and unsparing geopolitical analyst who views this war as one of the most reckless and strategically bankrupt military adventures in recent history.

False Premise

Killing Ali Khamenei was expected to collapse the Islamic Republic. Iran's immediate response — unified institutions, regionalised conflict, defiant new Supreme Leader — proved this catastrophically wrong within days.

No Strategy

Shifting from demanding Iran's overthrow to claiming victory within eleven days reveals a war launched without any coherent political objective — not pragmatism but a fundamental strategic vacuum.

Human Cost

Missiles striking a girls' school, 160 civilians killed, Tehran enveloped in smoke — these are deliberate moral anchors highlighting the real price of miscalculation.

Way Forward

More bombing will not break Iran. It deepens the miscalculation, strains the global economy, and pushes peace further away. The war must end immediately.

Mcq's

Q1. Which of the following best summarises the central argument of the passage?

- a) Iran's appointment of Mojtaba Khamenei as Supreme Leader proves that the Islamic Republic has permanently defeated the U.S. and Israel militarily**
- b) The U.S.-Israeli war against Iran was strategically unnecessary and has failed to achieve its objectives while the Iranian state remains firm and the way forward is an immediate end to the war**
- c) Trump's shifting war objectives prove that the U.S. Congress must immediately intervene to force a ceasefire with Iran**
- d) Israel's strikes on Iran's oil infrastructure have successfully crippled Iran's economy making a negotiated settlement inevitable**
- e) The appointment of Mojtaba Khamenei signals that Iran is preparing for a prolonged war against the U.S. and Israel**

Answer: b

Q2. How many members does Iran's Assembly of Experts have?

- a) 72**
- b) 100**
- c) 88**
- d) 64**
- e) 95**

Answer: c

Q3. What can be inferred from Trump's shifting objectives — from demanding Iran's overthrow on day one to claiming victory by day eleven?

- a) Trump had a clearly defined and evolving military strategy that adapted successfully to changing ground realities**
- b) Trump's shifting goalposts reveal that the war was launched without clear achievable political objectives reflecting a fundamental strategic miscalculation**
- c) Trump's declaration of victory on day eleven confirms that the U.S. had achieved all its stated military objectives in Iran**
- d) The shifting objectives were a deliberate diplomatic strategy to keep Iran uncertain about American intentions**
- e) Trump's changing positions were driven entirely by pressure from Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli government**

Answer: b

Q4. Read the following sentence from the passage:

"If Mr. Trump believed that his initial decapitation strike would lead to the Islamic state's collapse, he was mistaken."

Which of the following gives the correct meaning, one synonym, and one antonym of the word "decapitation" as used here?

- a) Meaning — a surgical military strike on enemy supply lines; Synonym — blockade; Antonym — reinforcement**
- b) Meaning — the targeted elimination of a state's top leadership to cause its collapse; Synonym — beheading of leadership; Antonym — installation of leadership**
- c) Meaning — a large scale bombardment of civilian infrastructure; Synonym — carpet bombing; Antonym — precision strike**
- d) Meaning — a diplomatic ultimatum delivered to a foreign government; Synonym — ultimatum; Antonym — negotiation**
- e) Meaning — a covert intelligence operation targeting enemy communication networks; Synonym — sabotage; Antonym — restoration**

Answer: b

Q5. The author asks — *"what is the point of continuing to bomb a people whom the Americans promised to liberate without clearly achievable political goals?"* Which of the following is the underlying assumption?

- a) Military action is only justified when it is accompanied by a formal declaration of war approved by the United Nations**
- b) Military force without clearly defined and achievable political objectives is purposeless and ultimately self-defeating**
- c) The U.S. has a historical obligation to liberate oppressed populations regardless of political consequences**
- d) Iran's civilian population fully supports the Islamic Republic and does not want liberation from clerical rule**
- e) Bombing campaigns always fail to achieve political objectives regardless of the military power involved**

Answer: b

Q6. What was the age of Mojtaba Khamenei when he was appointed as Supreme Leader?

- a) 48**
- b) 63**
- c) 52**
- d) 57**
- e) 61**

Answer: d

Q7. The author argues that the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran was a wholly unnecessary strategic blunder. Which of the following if true would most weaken this argument?

- a) Iran was within weeks of completing a nuclear weapon at the time of the February 28 strike making military action the only viable option**
- b) Trump shifted his war objectives multiple times within the first eleven days suggesting the absence of a coherent strategy**
- c) Independent investigations confirmed that American missiles struck a girls' school killing over 160 civilians**
- d) Oman had already announced that a nuclear deal was within reach just hours before the strikes began**
- e) Iran responded to the strikes by attacking U.S. bases and energy infrastructure across the Persian Gulf region**

Answer: a

Q8. Which of the following best describes the tone of the passage?

- a) Cautiously optimistic about a diplomatic resolution between Iran and the U.S.
- b) Neutral and analytical presenting both sides of the conflict equally
- c) Sharply critical and unambiguously opposed to the continuation of the war
- d) Alarmist and sensationalist about the risk of a global nuclear conflict
- e) Sympathetic toward Iran while remaining balanced about American strategic interests

Answer: c

Q9. The author argues that the Iranian state is far from collapsing despite the U.S.-Israeli strikes. Which of the following if true would most strengthen this argument?

- a) Iran's oil exports have dropped by 60% since the beginning of the war severely straining its economy
- b) All branches of the Iranian state including the military clergy and political establishment have united behind the new Supreme Leader
- c) Several senior Iranian military commanders have reportedly defected to opposition groups since the February 28 strike
- d) Iran's Assembly of Experts took three weeks to agree on a new Supreme Leader reflecting deep internal divisions
- e) Large scale protests against the Islamic Republic have broken out in Tehran and other major Iranian cities

Answer: b

Q10. The phrase "shifting the goalposts" as used in the passage means:

- a) Moving military assets to new strategic positions during a conflict**
- b) Changing the objectives or conditions of a situation after it has already begun**
- c) Transferring political responsibility from one leader to another**
- d) Relocating diplomatic negotiations to a neutral venue**
- e) Adjusting military strategy in response to changing battlefield conditions**

Answer: b

Q11. Read the following conclusions and choose the correct option:

- 1. Iran's appointment of Mojtaba Khamenei as Supreme Leader signals defiance and institutional continuity rather than collapse**
- 2. Trump's declaration that America had already won the war by day eleven was consistent with the ground realities in Iran at that time**
- 3. The war was launched despite Oman confirming that a nuclear deal was within reach making it strategically and diplomatically unjustifiable**
- 4. Israel's strikes on Iran's oil storage facilities and the U.S. strike on a girls' school suggest that civilian infrastructure has become a target in this war**

- a) Only statements 1 and 2 are correct**
- b) Only statements 2 and 3 are correct**
- c) Only statements 1, 3 and 4 are correct**
- d) Only statement 4 is correct**
- e) All statements are correct**

Q12. Which of the following best captures the central theme of the passage?

- a) The rise of Mojtaba Khamenei and its implications for Iran's domestic political order**
- b) The strategic failure of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran and the urgent need to end it**
- c) The role of Oman in mediating nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States**
- d) The economic consequences of the war for global energy markets and oil importing nations**
- e) Trump's domestic political challenges as sections of his own base turn against the war**

Q13. Read the following statements and choose the correct option:

- 1. Iran's decision to elevate Mojtaba Khamenei who lost family members in the February 28 strike was a deliberate signal of resilience and continuity**
- 2. Trump's claim that America had already won the war by day eleven was credible given that Iranian missile attacks had stopped by then**
- 3. The fact that all branches of the Iranian state rallied behind the military and clergy suggests that the decapitation strategy backfired**
- 4. The global economy coming under greater stress is a direct consequence of the war's impact on energy prices and regional stability**

- a) Only statements 1 and 2 are correct**
- b) Only statements 2 and 4 are correct**
- c) Only statements 1, 3 and 4 are correct**
- d) Only statement 3 is correct**
- e) All statements are correct**

Q14. Which of the following best reflects the writer's overall point of view?

- a) The U.S. and Israel were justified in launching the war but must now find a face-saving exit strategy**
- b) Iran must accept unconditional surrender to end the war and prevent further civilian casualties on both sides**
- c) The war was a reckless and unnecessary strategic blunder driven by miscalculation and the U.S. must pull back immediately rather than continuing to follow Israel into deeper conflict**
- d) The international community must impose sanctions on both Iran and Israel to force a negotiated ceasefire**
- e) Trump's shifting war objectives reflect a flexible and pragmatic approach to an extremely complex geopolitical situation**

Q15. Which of the following sentences if inserted after *"The Iranian state is not folding, it is fighting back"* would most logically complete the author's argument?

- a) Therefore the United Nations Security Council must immediately convene an emergency session to impose a mandatory ceasefire**
- b) Every additional day of bombing only deepens the miscalculation strengthens Iranian resolve and pushes a negotiated solution further out of reach**
- c) This proves that Iran has always been the stronger military power in the West Asian region despite American air superiority**
- d) The U.S. must therefore immediately begin arming opposition groups within Iran to accelerate the collapse of the Islamic Republic**
- e) Israel must therefore bear sole responsibility for the continuation of the war as it was the primary instigator of the February 28 strike**

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