

## READING COMPREHENSIONS\_13

Read the passage carefully and answer the given below it. Certain words/phrases are given in bold to help you locate them while answering some of the questions.

Sanjaya Baru's book has been perceived as an attack on PM Manmohan Singh by a disgruntled employee who was denied a job by the Prime Minister in his second term. This is a completely wrong reading of the book. It is, in fact, a defence of Manmohan by a member of his fan club. Fortunately, it is not a fawning hagiography. It is straightforward and gossipy, but not excessively so. It is an important contribution to contemporary Indian history; it can also be read as a text book for those who wish to understand how politics and administration actually work in India of our times. Like the Crossman Diaries in Britain in earlier times and like Duty by Robert Gates in the US in recent times, it throws light on contingencies and counterfactuals.

Future historians may see inevitable and **inexorable** patterns in the way things have unfolded in India in the last decade. Baru's book will be a source that will help the historian focus with some humility on issues of choice and chance.

Baru was recruited by Manmohan and worked with him closely as Media Adviser, Baru is a loyal defender of his boss. Contrary to the popular perception of Manmohan being dour or politically clumsy, Baru makes the case that the economist turned politician is, in fact, a clever and sophisticated operator. Manmohan's excellent relationship with wily and experienced politicians like Sharad Pawar, Karunanidhi, Lalu Prasad, Harkishen Surjeet, Jyoti Basu and even Vajpayee and Jaswant Singh would not have been possible if he had been naïve or weak. On issues which mattered to Manmohan like Free Trade Agreements or the Nuclear Accord, he can be a cool and consummate political operator. But he does have his blind spots. Whether it is because he has a lifelong commitment to civil service traditions that one department must not **intrude** on the turf of another department, or it is out of a conviction that party politics is not his forte, or for whatever unmentioned reason, Manmohan has kept himself severely and completely away from the Congress Party. Perhaps, Manmohan felt that his own political guru, Narasimha Rao, paid a price for intruding into areas where both fools and angels should fear to tread. The net result was that Manmohan had less support from his own party leaders and, in Baru's opinion, that proved very costly for our "accidental Prime Minister".

There are some self-serving bits in this memoir. Manmohan's performance in UPA-1 is portrayed as outstanding. After all, Baru was with him most of that time, was he not? And some of the achievements of that time seem to have a greater Baru imprint than what other observers might **concede**. And virtually all the problems of Manmohan seem to have coincided with UPA-2 when Baru was no longer around! Nevertheless, Baru's professionalism and better nature does assert itself almost everywhere in the book. He gives himself far less credit than others who have written similar books tend to do. He is lucid enough to concede that in economic matters, effects are preceded by causes with some lags. The good times of UPA-1 were not merely because the global economy was strong, but because Manmohan inherited a good legacy from Vajpayee. The roots of many of the problems in UPA-2 were the results of sins of **profligacy** committed during UPA-1 when economic growth was not only taken for granted, but treated with some contempt by the elitist do-gooders of the National Advisory Council, which could have been a source of **anodyne** amusement, if so many of its actions had not ended up being dangerous, even disastrous for the country.

1. Which of the following, according to the author, is true about Sanjaya Baru's book?
  - a) It is a book intended to attack the former PM Manmohan Singh
  - b) It is a fawning hagiography
  - c) It is straightforward and excessively gossipy
  - d) It is a book which throws light on contingencies and counterfactuals of Indian politics
2. Which of the following statements is contrary to the facts mentioned in the given passage?
  - a) Narasimha Rao was the political guru of Manmohan Singh
  - b) As per civil service traditions, one department must not intrude on the turf of another department
  - c) Manmohan Singh kept himself severely and completely away from the Congress Party.
  - d) None of these
3. Which of the following facts supports the view that Manmohan was neither a naïve nor a weak Prime Minister?

- a) During his regime the nuclear deal was signed, which is one of most important achievements
- b) He had a very good relationship with wily and experienced politicians
- c) Manmohan Singh preferred to keep mum than to indulge into controversy
- d) He was aware of the fact that party politics is not his forte and hence he kept himself away from active politics.

4. Why, according to Baru, was Manmohan's performance in UPA-1 outstanding?

- a) Because Baru was with him most of the time
- b) Because the Congress Party had done a lot of good work to alleviate poverty
- c) Because the global economy was strong and Manmohan Singh had inherited a good legacy from Vajpayee.
- d) Because UPA-2 was full of scams

5. Choose the word/group of words which is most similar in meaning to the word/group of words printed in bold as used in the passage.

**Intrude**

- a) Associate
- b) Interfere
- c) Leave
- d) Combine

6. Choose the word/group of words which is most similar in meaning to the word/group of words printed in bold as used in the passage.

**Profligacy**

- a) Fragility
- b) Restraint
- c) Lacking
- d) Recklessness

7. Choose the word/group of words which is most similar in meaning to the word/group of words printed in bold as used in the passage.

**Anodyne**

- a) Soother
- b) Upsetting
- c) Excitative
- d) Agitating

8. Choose the word/group of words which is most opposite in meaning of the word/group of words printed in bold as used in the passage.

**Inexorable**

- a) Harsh
- b) Dogged
- c) Flexible
- d) Relentless

9. Choose the word/group of words which is most opposite in meaning of the word/group of words printed in bold as used in the passage.

**Concede**

- a) Allow
- b) Accord
- c) Acknowledge
- d) Reject

1. Option D

2. Option D

3. Option B

4. Option C

5. Option B

6. Option D

7. Option A

8. Option C

9. Option D