

## Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **outreach** (noun) – the level of reaching out/activity/effort; involvement.
2. **overreach** (noun) – an act of trying to do too much or overdoing something.
3. **intervention** (noun) – the process of intervening in something; involvement, interference.
4. **as long as** (phrase) – provided that.
5. **usurp** (verb) – take over, appropriate, seize.
6. **the executive** (noun) – the executive is a branch of government that enforces the law as written by the legislature and interpreted by the judiciary.
7. **mitigate** (verb) – reduce, lessen, decrease, make less severe.
8. **flailing** (adjective) – floundering, struggling, stumbling, blundering.
9. **apotheosis** (noun) – culmination, climax, high/highest point.
10. **taskforce** (noun) – unit, crew, outfit, section (mainly arranged for a task).
11. **transparent** (adjective) – open/candid, forthright, straightforward, honest.
12. **rational** (adjective) – logical, well reasoned, sensible, reasonable.
13. **equitable** (adjective) – fair, just, unbiased, impartial, even-handed.
14. **augment** (verb) – increase, intensify; improve, boost, enhance.
15. **projected** (verb) – estimated.
16. **facilitate** (verb) – make easy, make possible; assist, help/aid.
17. **audit** (noun) – inspection, examination, assessment, investigation.
18. **remit** (noun) – area of responsibility, area of activity, scope, ambit.
19. **mandate** (verb) – authorize, empower, appoint.
20. **measure** (noun) – action, step, procedure.
21. **remedial** (adjective) – corrective, restorative, reparative.
22. **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
23. **empowered** (adjective) – authorized, allowed, permitted, commissioned.

24. **set off** (phrasal verb) – give rise to, cause, trigger, prompt, bring about.
25. **proceedings** (noun) – legal action, lawsuit, case, litigation.
26. **constitute** (verb) – form, create, set up.
27. **draw (from)** (verb) – obtain from a particular source.
28. **rush** (verb) – act rapidly/hurriedly.
29. **the Solicitor General** (noun) – the second-highest rank for a law officer of the government.
30. **entertain** (verb) – consider, give consideration to, take into consideration, give attention to.
31. **unworkable** (adjective) – unrealistic, unfeasible, non-viable, impracticable.
32. **stay** (verb) – stop, prevent; postpone, put off, delay, defer.
33. **stay the order** (phrase) – stop a particular decision from being used; stay a particular action from taking place.
34. **calibrated** (adjective) – carefully assessed/analysed.
35. **the judiciary** (noun) – a branch of government in which judicial power is vested.
36. **encroach on** (verb) – intrude, trespass, impinge, infiltrate, invade, interfere with.
37. **domain** (noun) – field, area, arena, sphere.
38. **merit** (noun) – good point, strong point.
39. **indeed** (adverb) – in fact, actually, undeniably.
40. **toll** (noun) – number, count, total (number of deaths).
41. **frightening** (adjective) – alarming, scaring, terrifying.
42. **constitutional court** (noun) – The Supreme Court of India is the supreme judicial body of India and the highest court of India under the constitution. It is the most senior constitutional court, and has the power of judicial review. The high courts that deal primarily with constitutional law are also called as the constitutional courts.
43. **oblige** (verb) – require, compel, bind, force, put under an obligation.
44. **take upon** (phrasal verb) – undertake, accept, tackle, adopt, assume, shoulder, embrace.
45. **flak** (noun) – criticism, censure, hostility.
46. **lack of** (noun) – absence, deficiency, scarcity, unavailability.
47. **succour** (noun) – aid/help/support, assistance, relief (during difficulty).

48. **migrant** (noun as modifier) – a person who moves from one region to another – either within a country or across national borders in order to find work or better living conditions.
49. **bench** (noun) – a court of law with a number of judges.
50. **suo motu** (phrase) – Latin term means “on its own motion”. It is used where a government agency acts on its own knowledge.
51. **stakeholder** (noun) – a person with an interest in something.
52. priced.

Outreach and overreach: On judicial intervention during COVID-19 crisis  
**MAY 10, 2021 00:02 IST**

**As long as the court does not usurp executive’s role, action to mitigate a crisis is welcome**

Judicial intervention in response to the Union government’s flailing response to the health crisis has reached its apotheosis with the Supreme Court order forming **a 12-member national task force** for the effective and transparent allocation of medical oxygen to the States and Union Territories “on a scientific, rational and equitable basis”. Making recommendations on augmenting the supply based on present and projected demands and facilitating audits by sub-groups within each State and UT is also part of its remit. The Court has also mandated it to review and suggest measures for ensuring the availability of essential drugs and remedial measures to meet future emergencies during the pandemic. In other words, the national task force has become a judicially empowered group that may significantly guide the handling of the health crisis set off by the second pandemic wave. Faced with proceedings in High Courts relating to the allocation and availability of oxygen, the Centre submitted that an expert committee may be constituted, consisting of persons drawn from public and private health-care institutions, to facilitate a fresh assessment of the basis for the allocation.

When the Karnataka High Court ordered last week that the **Centre should supply 1,200 tonnes of medical oxygen daily** to the State, the **Centre rushed with a challenge to the apex court**. Solicitor General Tushar

Mehta argued that if every High Court started entertaining petitions on equitable allocation of oxygen, pandemic management would become unworkable. The [Supreme Court declined to stay the order](#), describing it as a careful and calibrated one. Several High Courts and the Supreme Court are examining different aspects of the pandemic response, including availability of beds and oxygen. The trend did raise concerns about the judiciary encroaching on the executive domain. There is some merit in the argument that allocation of resources based on a formula related to the present and projected requirements of each State is indeed an executive function. However, as the daily infection numbers and death toll have acquired frightening levels, the constitutional courts felt obliged to take it upon themselves to protect the right to life and good health of the population. It cannot be forgotten that the judiciary drew much flak last year for its initial failure to mitigate the crisis set off by the lack of succour to millions of migrant workers. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, who heads the Bench hearing the *suo motu* proceedings, has clarified that the Court was not usurping the executive's role, but only wanted to facilitate a dialogue among stakeholders. As long as this position is clear, the present intervention need not be seen as a dangerous overreach.

GUPTA