

## Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **overcrowding** (noun) – congestion.
2. **imprisonment** (noun) – incarceration, custody, confinement.
3. **relook** (noun) – reconsideration, rethinking, re-examination.
4. **effect** (verb) – carry out, perform, conduct.
5. **perennial** (adjective) – everlasting, unending, endless, permanent.
6. **occupancy** (noun) – the act of occupying a place; occupation.
7. **amidst** (preposition) – amid, in the middle of; during.
8. **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.
9. **from time to time** (phrase) – occasionally, now and again, periodically.
10. **address** (verb) – deal with, handle, tackle, grapple with.
11. **interim** (adjective) – provisional, temporary, transitional.
12. **acquire** (verb) – get, obtain, receive.
13. **salience** (noun) – prominence, importance, significance.
14. **in view of** (phrase) – because of, as a result of, taking into consideration.
15. **surge** (noun) – sudden increase or rise of something.
16. **raging** (adjective) – severe, extreme, excessive, inordinate.
17. **lockdown** (noun) – an emergency protocol implemented by the authorities that prevents people from leaving from a place; An extended state of confinement/encirclement/isolation of a person by the authority.
18. **preventive** (adjective) – preventative, precautionary, protective.
19. **as well as** (phrase) – and also, and in addition.
20. **constitute** (verb) – form, create, set up.
21. **bail** (noun) – conditional, temporary release of an arrested/imprisoned person when a specified amount of security is deposited or pledged (as cash or property) to ensure his/her appearance in court when required.
22. **parole** (noun) – the release of a prisoner, either temporarily for a special purpose or completely before the expiry of a sentence, on the promise of good behavior.
23. **besides** (preposition/linking adverb) – in addition to, as well, apart from.

24. **seek** (verb) – try, aim, attempt.
25. **remand** (noun) – pre-trial detention, preventive detention, or provisional detention.
26. **periodical** (adjective) – regular, occasional.
27. **readiness** (noun) – preparedness; willingness, inclination to do something.
28. **decongest** (verb) – relieve the congestion of (something).
29. **measure** (noun) – course of action, proceeding, procedure, step.
30. **merely** (adverb) – only, simply, just.
31. **vulnerability** (noun) – weakness, defencelessness, unprotectedness, susceptibility.
32. **comprehensive** (adjective) – complete, thorough, full, detailed.
33. **in order** (phrase) – correct, appropriate, fitting, suitable, acceptable.
34. **inmate** (noun) – inhabitant, occupant, a person living in an institution (like hospital, prison, etc.).
35. **solely** (adverb) – only, simply, merely.
36. **stringent** (adjective) – strict, severe, extreme, rigorous.
37. **invoke** (verb) – cite, refer to, adduce.
38. **activist** (noun) – a person who supports a political or societal change/cause.
39. **anti-terrorism** (noun) – counter-terrorism; actions taken to combat or prevent terrorism.
40. **alleged** (adjective) – supposed, claimed, professed, purported.
41. **complicity** (noun) – collusion, conspiracy, collaboration, connivance, involvement.
42. **take into account** (phrase) – consider, take into consideration, have regard to, reckon with.
43. **emphasise** (verb) – draw attention to, put stress on, underscore, highlight.
44. **adhere to** (verb) – abide by, follow, obey, comply with.
45. **norms** (noun) – standard, convention, guidelines, criterion.
46. **lay down** (phrasal verb) – formulate, stipulate, frame, draw up.
47. **give effect to** (phrase) – make operative, put in to practice.
48. **CrPC Section 436A** (noun) – under the Section 436A of the Cr.P.C, a person (undertrial) who has completed half of the maximum prison term prescribed for the offence may be released on personal bond with or without sureties.
49. **Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)** (noun) – The Code of Criminal Procedure (in India). The main legislation on procedure for administration of substantive criminal law in India. It was enacted in

1973 and came into force on 1 April 1974. CrPC tells about the criminal trial procedure.

50. **undertrial** (noun) – a person in custody (for court’s trial).
51. **prescribe** (verb) – stipulate, lay down, set down, promulgate.
52. **follow-up** (noun as modifier) – continuation.
53. **audit** (verb) – analyse, examine, scrutinize, investigate, appraise.
54. **selectively** (adverb) – discriminatorily, discriminately.
55. **arbitrarily** (adverb) – randomly/casually, irrationally, erratically, inconsistently, unreasonably, illogically.

## Protecting prisoners: On overcrowding of prisons

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### **Imprisonment practices need a relook so that the police do not effect unnecessary arrests**

If overcrowding of prisons has been a perennial problem in this country, high occupancy levels can only mean bad news amidst a pandemic. The Supreme Court has been intervening from time to time to address this problem, but its latest order directing the interim release of eligible prisoners acquires salience in view of the uncontrolled second surge in the raging pandemic. Last year, the Court had passed such an order quite early — the one of March 23, 2020 came even before the nation-wide lockdown. The Court had then ordered all States to take preventive steps as well as constitute high-powered committees to determine the class of prisoners who could be released on bail or parole for a specified period. In directing this week that besides identifying more prisoners for release, the same set of prisoners be given parole this year too, the Court continues its trend of seeking to protect prisoners as well as those guarding them from getting infected. There have been significant initiatives to prevent any uncontrollable spread within the congested jails, ranging from stopping the practice of transporting remand prisoners to court for periodical extension of custody and hearings to asking authorities to prepare readiness and response plans. The Court’s order is welcome, both as a move to decongest jails and a measure that protects the right to life and health of the prisoners. Now that the issue of reducing occupancy in the prison is once again under focus, and

not merely for the usual reason of overcrowding, but also in view of the vulnerability of prisoners and prison staff to infection and disease, a comprehensive look at imprisonment practices in the country may be in order.

There have been reports of prisoners testing positive and getting hospitalised. How far the regular testing and medical treatment available to inmates across the country is effective is unclear. Further, even political prisoners, such as those jailed in the Bhima Koregaon case without any direct link to any act of violence, are being repeatedly denied bail, solely because stringent laws have been invoked against them. Some political activists in Delhi are also in jail under anti-terrorism laws for alleged complicity in riots early last year. The courts must take into account their vulnerability to infection and consider bail. In its order, the Supreme Court has rightly emphasised the need to adhere to the norms it had laid down in *Arnesh Kumar vs State of Bihar* (2014) under which the police were asked not to effect unnecessary arrests, especially in cases that involve jail terms less than seven years. In the past, the Court has also asked authorities in all districts in the country to give effect to Section 436A of the Cr.P.C., under which undertrials who have completed half of the maximum prison term prescribed for the offence may be released on personal bond. Effective follow-up action is needed to audit these measures so that these are not implemented selectively or arbitrarily.

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