

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **breakdown** (noun) – failure, collapse.
2. **juncture** (noun) – point in time, time/moment, stage.
3. **quarter** (noun) – a period of three months (considered as one-fourth of a year).
4. **pause** (noun) – temporary stoppage, discontinuation, suspension; break/interval.
5. **precedent** (noun) – model, exemplar, example, pattern; previous example/instance, prior instance.
6. **given** (preposition) – considering, taking into account, bearing in mind.
7. **acrimony** (noun) – bitterness, hostility, resentment.
8. **transpire** (verb) – happen, occur, take place.
9. **compensation** (noun) – payment, repayment, settlement (for loss/damage).
10. **GST Compensation** (noun) – Under the GST law (In India), state governments are guaranteed full compensation for any revenue loss for the first five years after the introduction of the goods and services tax (GST) in July 2017. The compensation is a gap between actual revenue collected and projected revenue.
11. **dues** (noun) – payment (which is (long) pending).
12. **pandemic-induced** (adjective) – caused/produced by the pandemic.
13. **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.
14. **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.
15. **lockdown-dented** (adjective) – damaged by the lockdown.
16. **dent** (verb) – damage, impair, cripple, erode, weaken, undermine.
17. **equation** (noun) – the situation, the case, the problem, the question, the quandary, the predicament.
18. **awkward** (adjective) – problematic, troublesome, perplexing.
19. **reluctantly** (adverb) – hesitantly, unwillingly.
20. **back off** (phrasal verb) – retreat/withdraw, step back, move away (from an action).

21. **insist** (verb) – state, assert, announce, pronounce.
22. **surge** (verb) – rise or increase suddenly.
23. **normalcy** (noun) – a normal condition; normality, regularity.
24. **hobble** (verb) – restrict/control/limit the activity or development of something.
25. **onus** (noun) – responsibility, duty; burden, liability, obligation.
26. **figure out** (phrasal verb) – understand, comprehend, work out, find an answer/solution to.
27. **mobility** (noun) – transportability, portability.
28. **put in place** (phrase) – establish, set up, create/form.
29. **vaccination** (noun) – treatment with a vaccine to protect against a particular disease; immunization.
30. **sequence** (verb) – arrange, organize (something in an order).
31. **vaccine** (noun) – a biological preparation that improves immunity to a particular disease.
32. **soothe** (verb) – alleviate, ease, relieve, assuage, allay, mitigate.
33. **frayed** (adjective) – strained, taxed, overtaxed, irritated, edgy, tense, stressed.
34. **nerves** (noun) – anxiety, tension, strain, stress, worry.
35. **call** (noun) – requirement, need, demand, want.
36. **cite** (verb) – refer to, mention, make reference to.
37. **contend with** (phrasal verb) – deal with, cope with, face, grapple with (a difficult or unpleasant situation).
38. **élan** (noun) – enthusiasm, energy, finesse, keenness.
39. **toe the line** (phrase) – accept/agree to policies of someone/something, particularly under pressure.
40. **big-ticket** (adjective) – major, exclusive, prominent/important.
41. **(have a lot) on one's plate** (phrase) – have a lot of work to do.
42. **perspective** (noun) – outlook, viewpoint, approach.
43. **modality** (noun) – a particular method or procedure.
44. **cash flow** (noun) – funds, money, resources, wealth, revenue, reserves.
45. **gear up** (phrasal verb) – get ready, prepare, equip (oneself) for something.
46. **subsequent** (adjective) – following, ensuing, successive.
47. **pressing** (adjective) – urgent, critical, crucial, important.
48. **drop** (verb) – decrease, lessen, make less, reduce.
49. **oxygen concentrator** (noun) – a medical device that concentrates oxygen from ambient air. Atmospheric air has about 78 per cent nitrogen and 21 per cent oxygen, with other gases making up the

remaining 1 per cent. Oxygen concentrators filter surrounding air, compressing it to the required density and then delivering purified medical grade oxygen into a pulse-dose delivery system or continuous stream system to the patient.

50. **abroad** (noun) – foreign countries as a whole.
51. **storm** (noun) – assault, attack, onslaught, offensive, charge.
52. **missive** (noun) – message, report, announcement, bulletin, communiqué, news, notification, announcement.
53. **irascible** (adjective) – irritable, quick-tempered, ill-natured, ill-humoured.
54. **merrier** comparative adjective of **merry** (adjective) – cheerful, joyful, happy, in good spirits.
55. **eye** (verb) – look at, see, observe, view, regard.
56. **accommodative** (adjective) – cooperative, generous, agreeable, accommodating, helpful, good-natured.
57. **fiscal** (adjective) – financial.
58. **federalism/federal framework/system** (noun) – a system of government in which establishments such as states or provinces share power with a national government.
59. **irretrievable** (adjective) – irreversible, irreparable, irrecoverable.
60. **calamitous** (adjective) – destructive, ruinous, disastrous, catastrophic.

Avoiding breakdown: On GST council meeting

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The much-delayed convening of the GST Council comes at a critical juncture

After a gap of over seven months, the [GST Council will now meet on May 28](#), Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced last Saturday. That the Council, expected to meet every quarter, has taken possibly the longest pause in its functioning does not set a good precedent. Given the acrimony that transpired in its last few meetings over how the States' GST compensation dues for the pandemic-induced lockdown-dented 2020-21 were to be met, the long break makes Centre-State equations even more awkward. States later reluctantly agreed to the Centre's proposal to raise ₹ 1.1 lakh crore of [GST recompense dues](#) through special market borrowings, after the Finance Ministry backed off from insisting that States raise these loans directly. In the intervening period, the economy almost surged back to normalcy before being hobbled again by the second wave of infections. And unlike the first wave, there is a greater onus on the States now to figure out everything from what mobility restrictions to put in place, to vaccination sequencing, and the bigger headache of sourcing enough vaccines from within or outside India. [A Council meeting](#) before or after the Union Budget could have helped soothe States' frayed nerves.

Having ignored the call by several States for a Council meet all these months, citing the Assembly polls, the Centre will now also have to contend with a slight change in equations. The elan of re-elected State governments apart, a large State such as Tamil Nadu can no longer be expected to toe the Centre's line. There is much big ticket pending work on the Council's plate, but from the States' perspective, it would be necessary to get clarity on the modalities for receiving the ₹ 63,000 crore GST compensation still due to them, along with this year's dues, in a timely manner. Cash flow visibility would help gear up better, be it for vaccines or subsequent COVID-19 waves. Even more pressing is the demand to drop GST on material to battle the pandemic, including the 12% tax on oxygen concentrators, 5% on vaccines, and on relief supplies from abroad. Ms. Sitharaman responded with a tweet storm to a missive on the issue from the West Bengal CM to the PM. This suggests an irascible approach on an issue that more States are raising. Tax experts believe solutions are possible to reduce the GST burden. The Centre had dropped the GST on sanitary napkins after strongly defending the tax, with one stated worry being cheap imports. In the case of vaccines and critical supplies, the more the imports, the merrier it is now. That the GST revenue will be shared with the States may be factually

correct, but surely, neither the States nor the Centre are eyeing COVID-19 expenses as a fat source of revenue. An accommodative approach from the Centre could ensure India's fiscal federalism framework does not suffer an irretrievable breakdown at this calamitous juncture.

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