

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **unwarranted** (adjective) – unjustified, unnecessary, unreasonable, uncalled for, groundless.
2. **sedition** (noun) – incitement (to riot/rebellion), agitation, trouble making/provocation (against the established government/authority).
3. **resort** (noun) – recourse to, turning to, the use of, utilizing.
4. **clause** (noun) – (legal) term, provision, stipulation, requirement, condition.
5. **grave** (adjective) – serious, terrible, awful.
6. **provision** (noun) – clause, (legal) term, stipulation, requirement, condition.
7. **disaffection** (noun) – dissatisfaction, disgruntlement, discontent.
8. **state** (noun) – the government, the regime, the establishment.
9. **invoke** (verb) – cite, refer to, adduce.
10. **offence** (noun) – crime, illegal/unlawful act, wrongdoing.
11. **Section 124A of the IPC** (noun) – Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code lays down the punishment for sedition.
12. **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** (noun) – The Indian Penal Code (IPC) is the official criminal code of India. It is a comprehensive code intended to cover all substantive aspects of criminal law. The draft was passed into law on 6 October 1860. The Code came into operation on 1 January 1862. The Indian Penal Code of 1860, subdivided into 23 chapters, comprises 511 sections. IPC deals with crimes and punishments.
13. **the establishment** (noun) – the powers that be, the authorities, the system, the ruling class, the regime, the government, bureaucracy.
14. **critic** (noun) – censorer, attacker, fault-finder.
15. **dissenter** (noun) – objector, protester.
16. **vocal** (adjective) – vociferous, outspoken, forthright; relating to someone who expresses his/her views freely.
17. **detractor** (noun) – critic, fault-finder, censorer.
18. **seek** (verb) – try, aim, attempt.
19. **prosecute** (verb) – take to court, bring an action against, accuse, charge.
20. **accuse of** (verb) – charge with, indict for, prosecute for.
21. **diatribe** (noun) – a bitter verbal attack; a tirade, verbal onslaught, rant.
22. **vendetta** (noun) – prolonged feud/bitterness; revenge, vengeance.

23. **face value** (noun) – the outward appearance of something.
24. **prosecution** (noun) – legal action, legal proceeding, legal case.
25. **stoke** (verb) – incite, encourage, fuel, provoke (a certain feeling/emotion strongly).
26. **hatred** (noun) – enmity, antipathy, antagonism, hostility, resentment, aversion.
27. **alleged** (adjective) – supposed, claimed, professed, purported, ostensible, apparent.
28. **rampant** (adjective) – widespread, present everywhere/pervasive, unrestrained/out of control.
29. **attract** (verb) – evoke.
30. **Section 153-A of the IPC** (noun) – The purpose of the Section 153 A is to punish persons who indulge in wanton (deliberate) vilification (criticism) or attacks upon the religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc of any particular group or class or upon the founders and prophets of a religion.
31. **Section 505 of the IPC** (noun) – Section 505 of the IPC refers to punishment for incitement of any class or community to commit any offence against any other class or community. The punishment for violation of Section 505 of the IPC can be imprisonment for three years, or fine, or both. It is a non-bailable offence.
32. **sentence** (noun) – judgement, verdict, punishment; prison/jail term.
33. **imprisonment** (noun) – incarceration, custody, confinement.
34. **prescribe** (verb) – stipulate, lay down, set down, promulgate.
35. **allege** (verb) – claim, assert, state, proclaim, affirm.
36. **ill-treatment** (noun) – abuse, mistreatment, rough treatment, manhandling.
37. **neighbouring** (adjective) – adjacent.
38. **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.
39. **likely** (adverb) – probably.
40. **take up** (phrasal verb) – consider, accept, say yes to, agree to, undertake.
41. **unedifying** (adjective) – distasteful; unpleasant, undesirable (public event).
42. **first information report (FIR)** (noun) – a written document prepared by the police when they receive information about the commission of a cognizable offence.

43. take/run its course (phrase) – to develop in the normal way and come to an end naturally; cease to exist, draw to a close; finish, end.
44. reflection (noun) – opinion/thought, view, impression, assessment.
45. relevance (noun) – significance, importance.
46. imprison (verb) – jail, put in prison, incarcerate, lock up.
47. statute (noun) – act/law, regulation, rule (written & laid down by the legislature).
48. reflection (noun) – indication, display, demonstration.
49. imminent (adjective) – close/near, about to happen, approaching/impending.
50. public order (noun) – it is essentially the absence of disorder – the quiet and orderly behaviour of people in public space. It involves people behaving sensibly and rationally, and respecting others.
51. incitement (noun) – provocation, instigation, inducement, fomentation.
52. ingredient (noun) – element, part, component.
53. invariably (adverb) – always, every time, each time.
54. vaguely (adverb) – absent-mindedly, abstractedly, inattentively, forgetfully.
55. disloyalty (noun) – breach of faith/trust, betrayal, unfaithfulness, falseness.
56. enmity (noun) – hostility, opposition, hatred/hate, bitterness.
57. warrant (verb) – call for, necessitate, justify.
58. reconsideration (noun) – review, re-examination, reassessment, re-evaluation.
59. constitutionality (noun) – the condition of acting in accordance with an applicable constitution.
60. free speech (noun) – the right to express one's opinions publicly (without any restraint).
61. abolish (verb) – put an end to, do away with, get rid of, scrap, terminate, eradicate.

Unwarranted arrest: On sedition charges against Raghu Ramakrishna Raju

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The casual resort by the police to the sedition clause continues to cause concern

The arrest of K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju, an MP from Andhra Pradesh, on the grave charge of sedition, is yet another instance of the misuse of the provision relating to exciting “disaffection” against the government. The police in different States have been invoking sedition, an offence defined in Section 124A IPC, against critics of the establishment and prominent dissenters. It is not surprising that Mr. Raju, a vocal detractor of A.P. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, is sought to be prosecuted. However, his arrest is unwarranted, considering that he is being accused of only speech-based offences relating to his diatribe against his party leader and CM. It has predictably, and not without justification, invited charges of political vendetta. Even if one were to accept at face value the prosecution’s claim that his speeches stoked hatred against communities — he had referred to alleged rampant conversion activities in the State — and attracted prosecution under Section 153-A or Section 505, was his arrest necessary? These offences attract a prison term of only three years and, under the *Arnesh Kumar* ruling (2014) of the Supreme Court, there is no need to arrest a person for an offence that invites a prison term of seven years and less. Further, even sedition, which allows a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, also prescribes an alternative jail term of three years.

Mr. Raju has alleged ill-treatment while in CID custody. The Supreme Court has directed that he be examined at the Army hospital in Secunderabad in neighbouring Telangana. His bail petition is likely to be taken up later this week. It is unedifying to note that the CID has also named in the FIR, two television channels to which he gave interviews. While the legal process will take its course, it is once again time for a reflection on the

need and relevance of the offence of sedition, a colonial-era provision used to imprison people for political writings in support of Indian independence, to remain on the statute book. That State governments and various police departments are known for the casual resort to prosecution under this section is a poor reflection of the understanding of the law among civil servants everywhere. It is now fairly well known that the section is attracted only if there is an imminent threat to public order or there is actual incitement to violence — ingredients that are invariably absent in most cases. In addition, it remains vaguely and too broadly defined (the term ‘disaffection’ is said to include ‘disloyalty’ and ‘feelings of enmity’), warranting a total reconsideration. Recently, the Supreme Court decided to revisit the constitutionality of this section. While a judicial verdict will be welcome, it would be even more protective of free speech if the Centre abolished the provision.

GUPTA CLASSES