

## Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **circumvention** (noun) – bypassing, sidestepping, avoidance, runaround, dodging.
2. **ties** (noun) – association, relationship, bond, connection.
3. **bypass** (verb) – circumvent, avoid, sidestep, evade, dodge.
4. **wield** (verb) – have, exercise, exert, be possessed of.
5. **come with** (phrasal verb) – to be given/granted together with something.
6. **federal** (adjective) – relating to a system of government in which establishments such as states or provinces share power with a national government.
7. **centralise** (verb) – concentrate, bring under one roof, consolidate, control (under one authority).
8. **balance** (noun) – fairness, impartiality, egalitarianism, equal opportunity; equilibrium, evenness/levelness, equality.
9. **as well as** (phrase) – and also, and in addition.
10. **mutual** (adjective) – reciprocal, give-and-take, complementary, correlative, shared.
11. **in particular** (phrase) – particularly, specifically, especially, specially.
12. **obligation** (noun) – duty, responsibility, commitment, necessary condition, requirement.
13. **refrain** from (verb) – stop oneself, abstain, desist from, hold back.
14. **official** (noun) – officer, bureaucrat, administrator, mandarin.
15. **regime** (noun) – government.
16. **hold** (verb) – conduct, have.
17. **virtual** (adjective) – performing a task with the use of the computer, especially over a network.
18. **virtual meeting** (noun) – (interactive) online meeting.
19. **magistrate** (noun) – the judicial officers or civil officers of a state who handle minor legal cases in a specific area like town, district etc.
20. **National Education Policy (NEP)** (noun) – The National Education Policy, 2020 is meant to provide an overarching vision and comprehensive framework for both school and higher education across the country. It is only a policy, not a law; implementation of its proposals depends on further regulations by both States and the Centre as education is a concurrent subject.
21. **in charge** (phrase) – responsible for, in control of, at the helm of.

22. the executive (noun) – the executive is a branch of government that enforces the law as written by the legislature and interpreted by the judiciary; leadership, management, administration.
23. counterpart (noun) – equivalent, equal, fellow.
24. stand (noun) – position, stance, attitude, standpoint, approach.
25. depute (verb) – nominate, assign, delegate, choose/select.
26. boycott (verb) – avoid, shun, reject.
27. ought to (modal verb) – must, should.
28. address (verb) – talk to, speak to, give a discourse to.
29. precedent (noun) – model, exemplar, example, pattern; previous example/instance, prior instance.
30. Panchayati Raj (noun) – the system of local self-government of villages in rural India as opposed to urban and suburban municipalities.
31. defence (noun) – the act of defending one's action against the opposition; protection, shielding, safeguarding.
32. Articles 256 & 257 of the Constitution (noun) – Articles 256 and 257 mention a wide range of subjects on which the Union Government may give executive directions to State Governments.
33. provision (noun) – clause, (legal) term, stipulation, requirement, condition.
34. stipulate (verb) – lay down, specify, state (a requirement clearly).
35. oblige (verb) – require, compel, bind, force, put under an obligation.
36. comply with (verb) – abide by, adhere to, conform to.
37. direction (noun) – instruction, command, order, requirement.
38. belong to (verb) – be affiliated to, be associated with, be connected to, be linked to.
39. run (verb) – manage, administer, direct, control, govern.
40. bound to (adjective) – certain, sure, very likely, guaranteed.
41. resentment (noun) – bitterness, indignation, displeasure, dissatisfaction, disgruntlement, discontentment, enmity, hatred/hate.
42. elected representatives (of the State) (noun) – Chief Minister, Ministers & particularly Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).
43. Disaster Management Act (noun) – the Disaster Management Act, 2005 The stated object and purpose of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 is to manage disasters (e.g. cyclone, earthquake & etc.), including preparation of mitigation strategies, capacity-building and more. To address the current epidemic outbreak, the Central government has included the Covid-19 outbreak as “Notified Disaster” as a “critical medical condition or pandemic situation”.
44. invoke (verb) – cite, refer to, adduce.

45. **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.
46. **interest** (noun) – benefit, advantage, concern.
47. **undermine** (verb) – weaken, subvert, sabotage, damage.
48. **scope** (noun) – opportunity, possibility, chance.
49. **humiliate** (verb) – embarrass, humble, make ashamed, degrade, disgrace, discomfit.

## Circumvention: On Centre-State ties

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### **The Centre has a duty not to bypass political leadership in dealing with States**

Wielding power at the Centre comes with great responsibility. A major responsibility in a federal country with strong centralising features is to maintain the balance, as well as mutual respect, between political structures at the central and State levels. In particular, it is an obligation of the Centre to refrain from bypassing the elected leadership while dealing with States. Two recent developments have raised concern that the Centre wants to give instructions to officials functioning under elected State regimes. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has held two **virtual meetings with district magistrates** and State officials to review the COVID-19 situation. Union Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal held a virtual meeting** to discuss the **National Education Policy**, and related matters such as the conduct of Class XII examinations with State Secretaries in charge of education. While such meetings may help the Prime Minister or any Union Minister get some feedback from the field across India, it is quite unusual for leaders in the central political executive to bypass their counterparts in the States. The Tamil Nadu Minister for School Education, Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi, took the right stand by **not deputing any official to represent the State in Mr. Pokhriyal's virtual interaction**. The idea was not to boycott the meeting, but to say the Minister ought to have been included in a discussion on the NEP.

The Prime Minister addressing district magistrates, or collectors, does have a precedent. Rajiv Gandhi addressed the heads of the district administration in Uttar Pradesh, when it was under Congress rule, on the issue of Panchayati Raj. The defence then was that such direct interactions were permissible under the Constitution, citing Articles 256 and 257. These provisions stipulate that the States are obliged to comply with laws made by Parliament and also allow some directions from the Union government. If the Prime Minister belongs to one party, and the officials addressed are from a State run by another, there is bound to be resentment that the elected representatives of the State are being bypassed. In the present case, it is true that the Centre has a major role in the pandemic response. The Disaster Management Act has been invoked to specify guidelines on lockdowns, restrictions and relaxations and to ensure smooth medical supplies. However, it would be in the larger interest of the country if events and discussions are held in such a way that the political structures at the State are not seen to be undermined. There ought to be no scope for complaints, such as the one made by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, that Chief Ministers felt humiliated when all of them were not allowed to speak to the PM in a virtual interaction.