

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **transparent** (adjective) – open/candid, forthright, straightforward, honest.
2. **toll** (noun) – number, count, total (number of deaths).
3. **coronavirus** (CoV) (noun) – a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. (Courtesy: **WHO**)
4. **grim** (adjective) – distressing, upsetting, worrying, unpleasant, dismal/awful.
5. **milestone** (noun) – critical point, significant stage, turning point.
6. **wrenching** (adjective) – painful, distressing, agonizing.
7. **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.
8. **dent** (verb) – weaken, undermine, diminish, reduce, lessen.
9. **year-long** (adjective) – lasting for a year.
10. **endeavour** (noun) – activity, pursuit, aim/effort.
11. **obfuscate** (verb) – confuse, complicate, make unclear.
12. **dodge** (verb) – avoid, evade, shun, bypass, sidestep, circumvent.
13. **briefing** (noun) – information, instruction, direction (provided at a press conference).
14. **seek** (verb) – try, aim, attempt.
15. **fraction** (noun) – a (small) proportion/part/amount of something.
16. **slackening** (noun) – moderation, slowing down, easing off, reduction, diminishing, lessening.
17. **slacken** (verb) – decrease, lessen, diminish, moderate, become less intense.
18. **prompt** (verb) – cause, motivate, persuade, encourage, impel, urge.
19. **hypothesise** (verb) – suggest, submit, advance, propose, posit.
20. **genetic** (adjective) – relating to genes/genetics.
21. **peculiar** (adjective) – distinctive, unique, distinct, natural.
22. **circumstances** (noun) – situation, conditions, factors.
23. **confer** (verb) – present to, give out to, give to.

24. **immunity** (noun) – protection, resistance, non-susceptibility.
25. **heterogenous** (adjective) – diverse, varied, varying, contrasting, different, differing, divergent, unrelated.
26. **on the other hand** (phrase) – as an alternative, or, as another option, as a substitute.
27. **spectrum** (noun) – wide range, variety of people; gamut, ambit.
28. **point out** (phrasal verb) – identify, mention, indicate, draw attention to.
29. **undercount** (verb) – count (incorrectly) less than the actual number of.
30. **deliberate** (adjective) – intentional, planned, conscious, purposeful.
31. **bulletin** (noun) – report, release, statement, announcement.
32. **cremate** (verb) – dispose (of a dead person's body) by burning after funeral ceremony.
33. **protocol** (noun) – procedure, convention, rules of conduct, guideline.
34. **co-morbidity** (noun) – the presence of one or more additional conditions (diseases/problems) co-occurring/co-existing with a primary condition (disease/problem).
35. **backlog** (noun) – accumulation, logjam, pile-up/excess (of pending things).
36. **discrepancy** (noun) – difference, variance, contradiction, incompatibility.
37. **attributable to** (adjective) – considered as an outcome/result caused by.
38. **ferocity** (noun) – intensity, severity, strength.
39. **threshold** (noun) – it is an amount, level, or limit of something. Once the threshold is reached, something else happens or changes. point of entry, starting point.
40. **lack of** (noun) – absence, deficiency, scarcity, unavailability.
41. **the aged** (noun) – the senior (citizen), the old, elderly person.
42. **vulnerable** (adjective) – relating to a weak/neglected person who is in need of special care/support/protection; ill-protected, easily affected by, prone to, at risk of.
43. **specious** (adjective) – misleading, deceptive, false.
44. **absolute** (adjective) – complete, total, entire; definite, certain.
45. **(be) couple with** (verb) – combine, integrate, connect, incorporate, link.
46. **lack** (verb) – be without, be lacking, be deprived of, be short of.
47. **counterpart** (noun) – equivalent, equal, fellow.

48. **unchecked** (adjective) – uncontrolled, unconstrained, unrestricted.
49. **wreak havoc** (phrase) – cause/inflict a massive damage.
50. **vaccinate** (verb) – inoculate, administer, introduce (with a vaccine to provide immunity against a disease).
51. **vaccine** (noun) – a biological preparation that improves immunity to a particular disease.
52. **dose** (noun) – an amount/quantity of something.
53. **administer** (verb) – dispense, provide, give, apply (a drug/vaccine).
54. **so far** (phrase) – until now, up to the present, up to this point.
55. **redouble** (verb) – make something more intense/ stronger; to increase, strengthen, intensify something considerably.
56. **unpalatable** (adjective) – disagreeable, unpleasant, distressing.

Facts and figures: On India's COVID-19 death count MAY 2, 2021 00:02 IST

India must be transparent about COVID-19 deaths to be able to deal better with the crisis

With India's official **death toll from the coronavirus crossing 200,000**, it is now placed fourth, after the United States, Mexico and Brazil. This is just another of the grim milestones in India's wrenching journey through the pandemic, but it dents the government's year-long endeavour to obfuscate and dodge unpleasant reality. At Health Ministry press briefings, officials have long sought to convey that India's death toll as a fraction of its population was lower than that of several countries. This is fact and continues to be so. The three countries with a higher death toll have, per million, 1,600-1,800 deaths between them. India's is only about 150. This low count is meant to impress that India has done a better job in protecting its people. These numbers and the slackening of the coronavirus curve in winter even prompted respected scientists to hypothesise if genetic or peculiar social circumstances had combined to confer a certain broad immunity to the vast heterogenous population.

On the other hand, a spectrum of independent experts have pointed out the problems in the system of death-reporting in India. Though undercounting deaths in a pandemic is expected, the concern in India has been that of deliberate omission. **As this paper pointed out**, on April 16, as per Gujarat's health bulletin, there were 78 official deaths. But 689 bodies were

either cremated or buried following COVID-19 protocol. Last year, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and West Bengal did not count deaths in those who had co-morbidities as COVID-19 deaths. However, these backlogs were corrected over time. Two in three deaths in India occur at home and 14% of deaths are not registered. There are wide discrepancies within States on how many deaths are actually recorded and among these, how many are attributable to COVID-19. However, the ferocity of the second wave has brought COVID-19 deaths into renewed focus. Visuals of bodies and of people on the threshold of death from a lack of access to basic medical facilities such as oxygen have made it harder for the government to convince people that the coronavirus is better controlled in India than anywhere else. The aged continue to be the most vulnerable to the infection but that India on average being younger than the West is less vulnerable to death is a specious argument. The absolute number of the aged — coupled with the fact that they lack the kind of access to health care their counterparts in developed countries have, means that the coronavirus, left unchecked, would wreak havoc. Even now, less than 4% Indians above 60 have been fully vaccinated. This when over 15 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far. India must redouble its efforts at being honest and transparent with its numbers, however unpalatable they may be.

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