

## Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. sleuth (noun) – detective/investigator (police officer in this context).
2. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) (noun) – Indian Space Research Organisation, formed in 1969, superseded the erstwhile Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR). Vikram Sarabhai, having identified the role and importance of space technology in a Nation's development, provided ISRO with the necessary direction to function as an agent of development. ISRO then embarked on its mission to provide the Nation space-based services and to develop the technologies to achieve the same independently. (Courtesy: [www.isro.gov.in](http://www.isro.gov.in)).
3. spy (noun) – secret agent, undercover agent, enemy agent, foreign agent.
4. mastermind (noun) – initiator, planner, producer.
5. much-needed (adjective) – needed to a large extent.
6. step forward (noun) – improvement, development, advancement, progress.
7. look into (phrase) – investigate, explore, inquire about.
8. implicate (verb) – involve, connect, embroil (someone in a crime); incriminate.
9. espionage (noun) – the act of spying; obtaining secret or confidential (political or military) information of a country and/or disclosing it without the permission of that country; undercover work, infiltration, counter-intelligence.
10. accountability (noun) – responsibility, liability, answerability.
11. suspected (adjective) – suspicious sceptical, doubtful, cynical.
12. frame-up (noun) – conspiracy, plot, scheme.
13. annals (noun) – (historical) document, record, report.
14. unfounded (adjective) – groundless, baseless, unjustified.
15. suspicion (noun) – misgiving, doubt/qualm, distrust, scepticism.
16. spark (verb) – cause, lead to, prompt, give rise to, initiate.
17. claim (noun) – allegation, charge; assertion, contention.
18. mission (noun) – expedition, journey (into space); assignment, project, operation (relating to space technology).
19. highlight (verb) – underline, underscore, emphasize, call attention to.
20. grave (adjective) – crucial/critical, serious, significant.
21. lapse (noun) – failure, mistake, blunder/oversight.

22. **lack of** (noun) – absence, unavailability, non-existence.
23. **compensation** (noun) – payment, repayment, settlement (for loss/damage).
24. **take into account** (phrase) – consider, take into consideration, have regard to, reckon with.
25. **honour** (noun) – distinction, fame, merit, high respect, great esteem.
26. **dignity** (noun) – self-esteem, self-worth, self-respect.
27. **charge** (noun) – accusation, allegation, indictment.
28. **grave** (adjective) – terrible, awful, dreadful.
29. **interrogation** (noun) – cross-questioning, cross-examination, probing.
30. **frame** (verb) – plan, sketch out, hatch, orchestrate.
31. **ought to** (modal verb) – must, should.
32. **proceed** (verb) – move forward, carry on, go on.
33. **significantly** (adverb) – notably, importantly, seriously, crucially.
34. **mandate** (verb) – require, necessitate, make mandatory.
35. **confidential** (adjective) – secret.
36. **secrecy** (noun) – confidentiality.
37. **odd** (adjective) – unusual, strange, uncommon.
38. **contestation** (noun) – contention, disagreement, disputation, argument.
39. **findings** (noun) – conclusion, result; decision, verdict.
40. **outcome** (noun) – result, effect, consequence.
41. **indeed** (adverb) – in fact, actually, undeniably.
42. **merits** (noun) – an essential inherent quality (rights and wrongs only) while evaluating a case (not by external aspects).
43. **malicious** (adjective) – evil-intentioned, ill-natured, vengeful, defamatory, hostile.
44. **Criminal Law** (noun) – a complex system of laws concerned with the punishment of individuals who commit crimes.
45. **set in motion** (phrase) – start, begin, activate, initiate, launch; trigger off, set off, cause, bring about.
46. **fancy** (noun) – idea, notion, thought, opinion, belief.
47. **notion** (noun) – idea, belief, opinion, view, conception, conviction.
48. **maliciously** (adverb) – evil-intentionedly, ill-naturedly, vengefully/cruelly.
49. **gravity** (noun) – seriousness, importance/significance, severity.
50. **necessitate** (verb) – make necessary, require, call for.
51. **persuasive** (adjective) – convincing, effective, compelling, forceful, powerful, influential.
52. **means** (noun) – way, method, mode.

53. **call (for)** (noun) – requirement, necessity, need, demand.
54. **erring** (adjective) – offending, lawbreaking, guilty, culpable, misbehaving, criminal, aberrant/deviating.
55. **revive** (verb) – reintroduce, reinstate, bring back.
56. **thankfully** (adverb) – fortunately.
57. **shoot down** (phrasal verb) – dismiss, reject, deny, refuse (forcefully).
58. **fitness of things** (phrase) – competence, eligibility, capability.
59. **impediment** (noun) – barrier, obstruction, restriction.
60. **restorative justice** (noun) – it is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior. It is best accomplished through cooperative processes that allow all willing stakeholders to meet, although other approaches are available when that is impossible.
61. **lead to** (verb) – result in, cause, bring on, give rise to.

## Probing the sleuths: On the ISRO spy case

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### **CBI probe into ISRO spy case masterminds is a much-needed step forward**

The Supreme Court's order tasking the CBI to look into the Justice D.K. Jain committee report on the action to be taken against those who implicated space scientist Nambi Narayanan in the 'ISRO espionage case' of 1994 is a logical and much-needed step forward in ensuring accountability for the suspected frame-up. Representing a dark, but brief, chapter in the annals of police investigation in the country, the case was based on unfounded suspicion sparked by the arrest of two Maldivian women and the claims they made in their statements to the police. The Kerala Police arrested Mr. Narayanan based on suspicion that he was among those sharing official secrets relating to space technology and missions to foreign agents. After the investigation was transferred to the CBI in a matter of weeks, the central probe agency recommended that the case be closed, highlighting grave lapses in the probe and the complete lack of evidence. When the Supreme Court awarded a compensation of ₹50 lakh to the scientist in 2018, taking into account the damage to his honour and dignity following the arrest on grave charges and the interrogation that followed, it was widely expected that police officers who framed him ought to be

proceeded against too. The Court formed a committee headed by Justice Jain, a retired apex court judge, for the purpose. The panel's report was submitted recently, and the Centre supported the demand for follow-up action. Significantly, the Court has mandated that the report's contents be kept confidential while being forwarded to the CBI for a decision on how to proceed further. The element of secrecy may seem odd, but avoiding any contestation on its findings, which are to be treated as the outcome of a preliminary enquiry, will indeed be helpful in the agency proceeding on merits.

When it awarded compensation, the Court was quite convinced that the initial probe was malicious. "The criminal law was set in motion without any basis. It was initiated... on some kind of fancy or notion," it had observed. It is rare in India that those falsely implicated or maliciously arrested on grave charges get justice. The police are given to using questionable methods, and treat the gravity of the charge as something that necessitates stronger and more persuasive means of investigation. That Mr. Narayanan has succeeded in the battle for restoring his honour is a matter of relief, but it should be noted that the Kerala government has been resisting calls for disciplinary action against the erring police officers. It opposed the CBI's closure report and tried to revive the investigation by its own police, but thankfully, the effort was shot down by the Supreme Court. It would be in the fitness of things if there is no further impediment to the CBI in proceeding with its investigation against the officers concerned, and that the process of restorative justice leads to its logical conclusion.