Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **circular** (noun) – notice.
2. **embarrassment** (noun) – shame, humiliation, indignity, ignominy, loss of pride, loss of face.
3. **ill-thought-out** (adjective) – not carefully considered, not carefully planned, misconceived/badly planned.
4. **sweeping** (adjective) – comprehensive, all-inclusive, all-embracing, far-reaching.
5. **bottleneck** (noun) – a condition which appears as not solvable and so delays the process; setback, problem, issue, snag, difficulty.
6. **erect** (verb) – create, establish, form/set up.
7. **bureaucratic** (adjective) – rule-bound, rigid, inflexible, complicated.
8. pandemic-hit (adjective) – affected by the pandemic.
9. **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.
10. **virtual** (adjective) – performing a task with the use of a computer, especially over a network.
11. virtual conference (noun) – an interactive online event that brings together a group of people with similar interests or expertise so that they can learn/share information from one another.
12. **viable** (adjective) – reasonable, achievable, practical.
13. **channel** (noun) – means, method, medium, instrument, mechanism.
14. **collaborate** (verb) – join, cooperate, team up.
15. **peer** (noun) – equal, fellow, co-worker.
16. **state** (noun) – country, nation.
17. **broadly** (adverb) – generally, usually, mainly.
18. **mandate** (verb) – make mandatory/necessary; require.
19. **hostile** (adjective) – confrontational, belligerent, combative; opposed, inimical, antagonistic, ill-disposed.
20. **vague** (adjective) – imprecise, inexact, unclear/uncertain.
21. **abstruse** (adjective) – obscure, difficult, puzzling, perplexing.
22. **to one's credit** (phrase) – used to mention that someone deserves praise/admiration.
23. **speak out** (phrasal verb) – express, articulate, communicate, convey, voice (something straightforwardly & publicly).
24. **sound** (verb) – express, communicate, convey (a warning)
25. **detrimental** (adjective) – undesirable, harmful, unfavourable, counterproductive.
26. **rethink** (noun) – reconsideration, re-examination, reassessment, re-evaluation.
27. **underscore** (verb) – underline, emphasize, highlight.
28. **collaboration** (noun) – cooperation, alliance, partnership.
29. **substitute** (verb) – replace.
30. **face-to-face** (adjective) – personally, in person, head on, direct.
31. trust-building (noun) – the process of bringing all the members together and creating trust based on activities and exercises.
32. **hurdle** (noun) – obstacle, difficulty, problem, impediment.
33. **pose** (verb) – constitute, present, create, cause (a problem or danger or risk).
34. **and so on** (phrase) – or more of the same, and similar things, and the like.
35. **electro-optics** (noun) – The branch of physics that deals with the use of electrical energy to create or manipulate light waves, generally by changing the refractive index of a light-propagating material. Put simply, it is the branch of material physics that deals with the effects electricity has on optical materials.
36. **enable** (verb) – permit, allow, facilitate.

37. **promise** (verb) – indicate, point to, denote, signify.
38. **forge** (verb) – form, create, build up (something successful).
39. **alliance** (noun) – association, union, partnership.
40. **avenue** (noun) – way, method, direction, approach.
41. **open up** (phrasal verb) – make something available/accessible.
42. **bound by** (adjective) – obliged, compelled, required, constrained.
43. **straitjacket** (noun) – restriction, restraint, constraint.
44. **stride** (noun) – make progress, make headway, gain ground, progress, advance.
45. **growing** (adjective) – increasing.
46. **peer-reviewed** (adjective) – relating to a process by which something research or publication is evaluated by a group of experts in the appropriate field.
47. Nature Index (noun) – The Nature Index is a database of author affiliation information collated from research articles published in an independently selected group of 82 high-quality science journals. The database is compiled by Nature Research. The Nature Index provides a close to real-time proxy of high-quality research output and collaboration at the institutional, national and regional level.
48. **moreover** (adverb) – besides, furthermore, in addition.
49. **allay** (verb) – reduce, diminish, decrease, lessen; alleviate, ease, relieve.
50. **biopiracy** (noun) – unauthorized use of resources for scientific research. Biopiracy happens when researchers or research organisations take (biological) resources without official sanction, largely from less affluent countries or marginalised people.
51. **humanity** (noun) – humankind, the human race, people.
52. **free from** (verb) – unaffected by, clear of, without, devoid of.
53. **paranoid** (adjective) – over-suspicious, distrustful, worried, extremely fearful, nervous, insecure.
54. **curb** (noun) – control, restraint, containment, restriction.
55. **scholar** (noun) – academic, intellectual, expert/pundit, learned person.
56. **sanctify** (verb) – approve, sanction, vindicate, endorse, justify.
57. **notion** (noun) – idea, belief, opinion, view.
58. **prevail on/upon** (verb) – win someone over, persuade, convince, influence, prompt.
59. **lead to** (verb) – result in, cause, bring on, call forth, give rise to.
60. **liberal** (adjective) – progressive, forward-thinking, broad-minded.

Open minds: On withdrawal of circular on online conferences
FEBRUARY 27, 2021 00:02 IST

After online conferences circular withdrawal, the effort should be to promote interactions

The Centre has saved itself from continuing **embarrassment** (शर्मिंदगी)at the international level by withdrawing(वापिस लेना)the Education Ministry's **ill-thought-out** guidelines for holding online conferences, seminars and training sessions. The **sweeping circular**, issued in consultation(परामर्श) with the External Affairs Ministry, created a **bottleneck**(परेशानी) for scientists in public universities, colleges and organisations and **erected** (खड़ा करना)new **bureaucratic**(नौकरशाही संबंधी) barriers (प्रतिबंध) in a **pandemic-hit** phase when **virtual**(अप्रत्यक्ष)conferences are the only **viable** (संभव)channel for researchers to **collaborate** (मिलकर काम करना)with global **peers**. Academicians and others organising the events were, as per the January circular, required to get prior (पूर्व)official approval(स्वीकृति) and ensure (पक्का करना)that the conference topics do not relate to security of the state, border, the northeast, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and broadly, any "internal matters". Event organisers were also **mandated** to give preference to technological tools and channels not owned or controlled by **hostile** (विरोधी)countries or agencies. The effect of such a **vague**(धुँधला) and **abstruse**(जटिल) set of instructions could only be to **abandon**(छोड़ना) efforts to organise conferences. **To their credit**, Indian scientists **spoke out**, and the Indian Academy of

Sciences sounded a warning on the order's **detrimental**(नुकसानदेह) effect on development of science, prompting(उकसावा) a **rethink**.

The pandemic from last year has **underscored**(ज़ोर देना) the value of virtual **collaboration** for many, although it cannot be argued that it completely **substitutes** for face-to-face interactions, trust-building and team formation. Without **hurdles**(रुकावटे) **posed** by visas, expensive travel, physical disability and so on, thousands of scientists have been able to participate in online conferences. Attendance at such events grew by 80% in 2020 over 2019 for the Plant Biology Worldwide Summit and over 300% for the American Physical Society meeting, as also for international meetings on cancer, lasers and **electro-optics**. Many scientists also think a combination of post-COVID-19 physical conferences and new possibilities **enabled** by virtual **collaborations** promise to **forge**(बनाना) even stronger alliances(गठबंधन). An entirely new **avenue**(रास्ता) has also **opened up** for national conferences with global experts taking part that researchers and students in the smallest towns can attend. This cannot, however, happen if institutions are **bound** (सीमित होना)by a bureaucratic **straitjacket**(प्रतिबन्ध). India has made good **strides**(उन्नति) in some fields with a growing number of **peer-reviewed** publications, especially in chemistry and physical sciences, as the Nature Index notes. Moreover, **rigorous**(कड़ा) work can help **allay**(कम करना, शान्त करना) **concerns**(चिन्ता), such as on **biopiracy**, by **documenting** (दस्तावेज़ करना)natural assets. The humanities, too, need to be freed from **paranoid**(शक्की) **restrictions** on research topics, curbs(रोक) on scholars, and the growing pressure to **sanctify**(शुद्ध करना) cultural **notions**(विचार) of science and history. Good sense has **prevailed** (प्रचलित होना)on the issue of online conferences, and it should lead to a more **liberal**(उदार) **approach** (पहुँच)to all research.