

1. **tango** (noun) – Two people involved in a bad/tough situation are equally responsible for it; Tango is a dance which requires two partners moving in relation to each other, sometimes in tandem (alongside each other), sometimes in opposition.
2. **junk** (verb) – throw away, discard, abandon/shed.
3. **pretence** (noun) – false show, display, outward appearance.
4. **neutrality** (noun) – impartiality, even-handedness, fairness.
5. **plead** (verb) – claim, assert, allege.
6. **helplessness** (noun) – inability to act effectively.
7. **model code of conduct** (noun) – a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for conduct of political parties and candidates during elections.
8. **have come a long way** (phrase) – progress to a developed, higher level.
9. **assert** (verb) – declare, claim, contend.
10. **sporadic** (adjective) – occasional, infrequent, irregular.
11. **bust** (noun) – a sculpture (of a person's head).
12. **all-out** (phrase) – forceful, vigorous, powerful.
13. **footprint** (noun) – mark, impression, track.
14. **psychosis** (noun) – insanity, mental illness/hysteria, instability/distracton.
15. **prematurely** (adverb) – too soon, too early, before the usual time.
16. **quite** (adverb) – in every respect, in all respects, without exception.
17. **devoid of** (adjective) – lacking, without, free of/free from.
18. **evidently** (adverb) – seemingly, apparently, on the face of it.
19. **partisan** (adjective) – biased, prejudiced, one-sided.
20. **accommodate** (verb) – help/assist, serve; adjust/attune.
21. **slate** (verb) – schedule, plan, organize.
22. **curtailment** (noun) – reduction, decrease, restriction.
23. **credibility** (noun) – trustworthiness, reliability, integrity.
24. **come under** (phrasal verb) – be subjected to.
25. **cloud** (noun) – a state of suspicion, trouble, problem.
26. **manifestly** (adverb) – clearly, obviously, apparently.
27. **erode** (verb) – (gradually) deteriorate, destroy, spoil.
28. **ferocious** (adjective) – strong, powerful, fierce.
29. **provocation** (noun) – prompting, inducement, incitement.
30. **revive** (verb) – reintroduce, relaunch, bring back.
31. **alleged** (adjective) – claimed, professed, purported.
32. **norm** (noun) – standard, criterion, measure.
33. **fair play** (noun) – justice, equity, impartiality.
34. **vandalisation** (noun) – harm, injury, destruction.
35. **stooge** (noun) – subordinate, assistant; henchman; pawn/puppet.
36. **unjust** (adjective) – wrong, unjustifiable, unreasonable.
37. **turn out** (phrasal verb) – transpire, emerge; happen/occur.
38. **powder keg** (noun) – a dangerous or tense situation.

West Bengal tango: on Election Commission of India

The Election Commission has junked even the pretence of neutrality

From pleading helplessness before the Supreme Court in enforcing the Model Code of Conduct a month ago, the Election Commission has come a long way in asserting its powers. On Wednesday it took the rare step of ordering that campaigning in West Bengal's nine Lok Sabha constituencies that go to the polls on Sunday end earlier than scheduled. West Bengal had witnessed sporadic incidents of violence through the previous phases of polling, but on Tuesday tensions ran high after clashes during a roadshow of BJP president Amit Shah in Kolkata. The destruction of a bust of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, the 19th century reformer and cultural icon of Bengal, by suspected BJP activists has put the party on the defensive in a State where it is making an all-out effort to expand its footprint. The EC may have had sufficient reasons to conclude that a 'fear psychosis' has gripped the State, and therefore campaigning must end prematurely. In TMC-ruled West Bengal, the entire government machinery, the district administration and the police, could quite possibly be at the service of the ruling party. However, the advanced deadline of 10 p.m. on Thursday to end campaigning was devoid of any logic or reason, other than being evidently partisan towards the BJP. The 10 p.m. deadline clearly accommodated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's last rallies in the State slated for Thursday evening. If in the EC's assessment campaigning could have led to violence, why did it not order its curtailment on Wednesday or early in the day on Thursday? Since the announcement of the Lok Sabha poll schedule, the EC's credibility has come under a cloud. The manifestly partisan decision on the campaigning deadline in West Bengal has further eroded trust in the institution.

Trinamool Congress leader and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who has been putting up a ferocious fight against Hindutva politics in the State, has expectedly found support from Opposition parties across the country. Most parties have been justifiably critical of the EC's conduct through this election, and it was not surprising that the latest provocation has revived their complaints. The Congress pointed out that the EC had dismissed 11 complaints it had filed regarding Mr. Modi's alleged violations of the MCC. The Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav said the decision went "against all norms of democratic fair play", while DMK president M.K. Stalin said there was a "BJP pattern" in the destruction of the Vidyasagar statue, connecting it to the vandalism of Periyar statues in Tamil Nadu last year. BSP chief Mayawati said Mr. Modi and "his stooges" were

targeting Ms. Banerjee in a “dangerous and unjust trend”. The BJP’s assessment of West Bengal’s importance for its chances of returning to power is understandable, but its strategy is threatening the peace in the State. The EC’s action has only made matters worse, allowing Ms. Banerjee to play the angry victim in what is turning out to be the powder keg of India.