

1. **seldom** (adverb) – hardly, rarely, almost never.
2. **drubbing** (noun) – defeat, rout/loss; thrashing/beating.
3. **takeaway** (noun) – a key point/idea/fact.
4. **stave off** (verb) – avert, prevent, avoid.
5. **prospect** (noun) – chance, possibility, probability/likeliness.
6. **requisite** (adjective) – necessary, required, prerequisite/essential.
7. **upshot** (noun) – result, consequence, outcome/effect.
8. **legacy** (noun) – footprint, effect/outcome (something received from a predecessor or from the past).
9. **wean away** (phrasal verb) – to detach, disconnect, separate someone from depending on something.
10. **fence-sitter** (noun) – someone who be neutral on something.
11. **ally** (noun) – partner, colleague, associate.
12. **strike a deal** (phrase) – to come to an agreement.
13. **faction** (noun) – group, division, section/side.
14. **ensuing** (adjective) – following, coming up next, cropping up (after as a result).
15. **litigation** (noun) – legal process, legal proceeding, legal action.
16. **haul** (noun) – (of election) the number of seats won by someone.
17. **defection** (noun) – desertion, absconding, decamping.
18. **proxy** (noun) – deputy, representative, substitute.
19. **antipathy** (noun) – hostility, aversion, opposition.
20. **contend with** (phrase verb) – cope with, face/confront, grapple/deal with.
21. **anti-incumbency** (noun) – a situation which is against elected officials currently in power; discontent against ruling government/ party in power.
22. **propel** (verb) – drive, prompt, impel.
23. **arch-rival** (noun) – adversary, opponent, nemesis.
24. **honour** (noun) – privilege/pleasure, satisfaction, compliment.
25. **landslide** (noun) – decisive, runaway (victory), overwhelming majority.
26. **objective** (noun) – aim, intention, purpose.
27. **undoubted** (adjective) – unquestioned, undisputed, unequivocal.
28. **dislodge** (verb) – remove, unseat, oust (from a post of power/authority).
29. **helm** (noun) – in charge, in control, in authority.
30. **stellar** (adjective) – exceptional, extraordinary, remarkable.
31. **hustings** (noun) – election platform/campaign.

## Not losing in defeat: artful survivor K.

### Palaniswami

**K. Palaniswami has proved to be an artful survivor despite the AIADMK's massive losses**

Seldom does someone on the losing side have so much to be satisfied about in defeat as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami. The **massive drubbing suffered by**

the AIADMK-BJP alliance in the State may be a notable outcome of the Lok Sabha election, but the positive takeaway for him is that he remains in office, and with added sheen of stability. By garnering nine out of the 22 Assembly constituencies that had by-elections alongside the Lok Sabha polls, the ruling AIADMK has got enough seats to stave off the prospect of losing its majority in the 234-member House. Although it lost 13 seats to the Opposition DMK, its tally went up to 123, five above the requisite majority. Another upshot is that T.T.V. Dhinakaran, the principal challenger to the AIADMK for Jayalalithaa's legacy, ended up losing so badly that he may not be in a position to wean away any more legislators from the party jointly led by Mr. Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam. With none of Mr. Dhinakaran's candidates coming close to victory in any of the Lok Sabha or Assembly constituencies, the possibility of so-called fence-sitters leaning towards him has disappeared. In two years, Mr. Palaniswami has survived challenges to his leadership, first from Mr. Panneerselvam, who later became his ally in a joint attempt to keep out Jayalalithaa's friend V.K. Sasikala, and later Mr. Dhinakaran. He survived the first crisis by striking a deal with Mr. Panneerselvam and his supporters. To combat the crisis caused by the Dhinakaran faction's revolt, the party got 18 MLAs loyal to him disqualified from the House. The ensuing litigation kept his regime going. The disqualification tactic did not turn out too well in the end. Ten of the DMK's 13-seat haul came from vacancies created by disqualification on defection charges. But the AIADMK managed just enough to survive in government.

The next question was whether Mr. Palaniswami would survive an electoral test, given that this was the first election held after the demise of Jayalalithaa and DMK supremo M. Karunanidhi. With his government seen as a proxy of the BJP regime at the Centre and the mood in the State being one of antipathy towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the AIADMK had to contend with double anti-incumbency. Losing around 20 of the 22 Assembly seats could have propelled arch-rival and DMK president M.K. Stalin to power. But while the DMK alliance had to share the honours in the Assembly by-elections, in the Lok Sabha constituencies it won a landslide. Mr. Palaniswami's electoral strategy was largely geared towards retaining as many Assembly seats as possible. He succeeded in the limited objective of protecting his regime. Mr. Stalin, the undoubted overall winner on the electoral field, will have to wait for another day to try to dislodge the artful survivor at the



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helm in **Tamil Nadu**. Despite a stellar show at the hustings, the DMK remains out of power at the Centre and in the State.

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