

1. **ailing** (adjective) – ill, unwell, sick.
2. **veteran** (noun) – (long-serving) expert, mature established/experienced person in an area of activity.
3. **cut short** (phrase) – shorten, truncate, curtail.
4. **vague** (adjective) – imprecise, uncertain, ambiguous.
5. **credit** with (verb) – be recognized as, be held responsible for.
6. **insurgent** (noun) – rebel, subversive, agitator.
7. **figurehead** (noun) – titular head, nominal leader, leader in name only (without power).
8. **thumping** (adjective) – huge, massive, very great.
9. **speculation** (noun) – conjuncture/supposition, guesswork, opinion/surmise.
10. **modus vivendi** (noun) – deal, understanding, contract.
11. **clamp down** on (phrasal verb) – suppress, put an end to, prevent/stop.
12. **turbulence** (noun) – turmoil, troubles, disturbance.
13. **wary** (adjective) – cautious, careful, circumspect.
14. **coterie** (noun) – gang, camp, faction/sect.
15. **wield** (verb) – exercise, exert, hold.
16. **rise above** (phrase) – deal with, cope with, get over.
17. **status quo** (noun) – the present situation, the current state, the existing state of affairs.
18. **persist** (verb) – continue/carry on, remain/linger/stay.
19. **evade** (verb) – elude, avoid, dodge.
20. **fervour** (noun) – passion, eagerness; dedication/zeal.
21. **sweep** (noun) – win a contest completely.
22. **Arab Spring** (noun) – it refers to the democratic protests, uprisings and demonstrations that arose independently and spread across the Arab world in 2011.
23. **resolve** (noun) – determination, resolution, firmness of purpose.
24. **cynical** (adjective) – sceptical, doubtful, distrustful.
25. **manoeuvre** (noun) – operation, activity; tactic/scheme.
26. **depleting** (adjective) – weakening, exhausting, draining.
27. **sustainable** (adjective) – valid, legitimate, warranted.
28. **contemptuous** (adjective) – dismissive, unenthusiastic, disdainful/lack of respect.
29. **clamour** (verb) – demand/protest, call.
30. **make a mockery of** (phrase) – make something to look foolish/absurd.
31. **candidacy** (noun) – candidate-ship.
32. **undermine** (verb) – weaken, compromise, subvert.
33. **fray** (noun) – contest/competition.

Algeria for change

President Bouteflika should withdraw his re-election bid

Algerians have been **protesting against their ailing 82-year-old President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika**, who is seeking a fifth term in elections next month. On the last day to file nominations, it was announced that the veteran would cut short his rule if he is re-elected and initiate constitutional reforms. But such vague assurances have had little impact on the

protesters in the hydrocarbon-rich nation who are becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of education and employment opportunities. Mr. Bouteflika, credited with restoring stability in Algeria after a bloody civil war in the 1990s between Islamist insurgents and the military, has remained a figurehead in recent years. Though he has held the post of President since 1999, ever since he suffered a stroke in 2013 he has hardly been seen in public. That, however, did not stop him from contesting the 2014 elections, which he won with a thumping majority, despite being out of action on the campaign trail. But the removal of top-ranking military and intelligence officials in subsequent years sparked speculation about who was really in charge. The government's *modus vivendi* in the years following the civil war was to clamp down on dissent, and hand out generous welfare benefits. Given the turbulence of the civil war years, the initial stability worked well in a country that had grown wary of change. Persisting in that approach enabled the ruling inner coterie to wield real power on behalf of the President. The *status quo* was allowed to persist as the opposition parties failed to rise above their divisions. Algiers even evaded the anti-establishment fervour that had swept several northern African countries during the Arab Spring. Now, Algerians are demonstrating a resolve to move on from being seen as dependents on the state, to assert their rights as citizens.

Mr. Bouteflika's latest re-**election** bid is being seen as a cynical manoeuvre by his inner circle. The voices of opposition have grown louder, as depleting oil revenues render the government's welfare programmes less sustainable. Moreover, the ruling National Liberation Front's contemptuous remarks against the clamour for change have incensed the public. Unlike in the past, the security forces have been more muted in their response so far. Thus, the government could well be misreading the situation if it believes the crisis will blow over. The military could be making a mockery of the electoral process by insisting on Mr. Bouteflika's candidacy, in effect undermining the highest elected office. It cannot reduce a vibrant society to one that is democratic only in name. Mr. Bouteflika, who is reported to be operating from a hospital in Switzerland, should withdraw from the fray. Algeria needs a new beginning.