

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. guard against (verb) – beware of, keep watch for, be alert to.
2. in the hands of (phrase) – under the control of; in the possession of.
3. signal (verb) – indicate, show, express.
4. willingness (noun) – readiness, preparedness, inclination, desire.
5. evolve (verb) – alter, change, transform gradually; develop, progress, advance gradually.
6. barring (preposition) – except for, with the exception of, excepting, excluding, omitting, leaving out.
7. nominee (noun) – candidate.
8. composition (noun) – formation, arrangement, organization.
9. broadly (adverb) – generally, predominantly, mainly.
10. reflect (verb) – indicate, show, reveal, exhibit.
11. social diversity (noun) – a feature of a society which is determined by caste, class, religion, occupational pattern in a given territory.
12. diversity (noun) – variety, variation, difference.
13. base (noun) – basis, bedrock, foundation, rationale.
14. cost (noun) – loss, suffering, drawback, disadvantage.
15. reinforce (verb) – strengthen, fortify, bolster up, underpin.
16. judicious (adjective) – wise, sensible, prudent, thoughtful, well-advised.
17. electorate (noun) – all the people who entitled to vote in an election.
18. resolve (noun) – determination, willpower, firmness, resolution, courage.
19. the spotlight (noun) – the public attention, the focus of public/media; the public eye.
20. set off (phrasal verb) – cause, bring about, begin/start, prompt, trigger.
21. quarter (noun) – source, place, direction; person.
22. 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.
23. change horses in midstream (phrase) – change your plan in the middle of something; change your mind in the middle of something.
24. mettle (noun) – ability, spirit, strength of character, resolve, determination, boldness.
25. parliamentarian (noun) – a member of a parliament.

26. **merit** (verb) – deserve, justify, be worth, be qualified for, have a right to.
27. **in one's own right** (phrase) – due to one's own qualifications/efforts instead of a relationship with someone else.
28. **swearing-in** (noun) – an official ceremony in which a person is taking the oath and admitted into a new official job.
29. **optics** (noun) – (typically in a political situation) the way in which an event is recognized by the public.
30. **in the midst of** (phrase) – in the middle of.
31. **untamed** (adjective) – wild, savage, uncontrollable.
32. **lockdown** (noun) – an emergency protocol implemented by the authorities that prevents people from leaving from a place; An extended state of confinement/encirclement/isolation of a person by the authority.
33. **misery** (noun) – pain, grief, anguish, agony, distress, torment, suffering.
34. **loom** (verb) – emerge, appear, become visible, take a threatening shape.
35. **shambles** (noun) – complete mess, disorder/disarray, disorganization.
36. **bench** (verb) – withdraw (from contesting in an election).
37. **criterion** (noun) – basis, standard (criteria is the plural form of criterion).
38. **subsequently** (adverb) – eventually, afterwards, later on, in due course.
39. **by way of** (phrase) – as a form of.
40. **reiterate** (verb) – repeat, say again, restate.
41. **primacy** (noun) – importance, priority, preference.
42. **ironically** (adverb) – paradoxically, unexpectedly, strangely.
43. **pack** (verb) – fill.
44. **command** (verb) – have control of, be the boss of, be in authority over, hold sway over; head, lead, rule, govern, control.
45. **open discussion** (noun) – a discussion in which anyone present can speak/say anything on a topic without any constraints.
46. **given** (preposition) – considering, taking into account, bearing in mind.
47. **sway** (noun) – dominion, control, command, power, authority.
48. **onus** (noun) – responsibility, duty; burden, liability, obligation.
49. **empower** (verb) – authorize, entitle, permit, allow.
50. **in a spot** (phrase) – in a difficult situation.
51. **bureaucracy** (noun) – the officials in a government (as a group).

52. **discipline** (verb) – train someone to do something in a controlled way.

Fresh start: On Pinarayi Vijayan's second term

MAY 20, 2021 00:02 IST

The Left must guard against the concentration of power in the hands of CM Pinarayi Vijayan

By choosing **17 fresh faces in the new Council of Ministers** of 21, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala is trying to signal a continuing willingness to evolve as a responsive political organisation. Barring Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the CPI(M) has not nominated any of its Ministers from the previous term. All four Ministers of the CPI are new. Eight Ministers are first time MLAs, as is the Speaker nominee, M.B. Rajesh. The composition of the Council broadly reflects the State's social diversity; and there are **three women**, the highest in history. The CPI(M) has reconfigured its social base in Kerala, at significant cost to the Congress, and it is reinforcing those trends through the selection of Ministers. Veena George and Saji Cherian are being rewarded for leading a shift of Christian voters in Central Travancore to the party. A judicious mix of youth and experience, the Council is an attempt at messaging to the electorate a fresh resolve of the LDF, particularly the CPI(M). But the exclusion of K.K. Shailaja, who has been in the spotlight for her role as Health Minister, has set off criticism against the CPI(M) from many quarters, including its own support base. After having won with a huge margin, she was expected to provide continuity to the State's fight against the pandemic. Her exclusion does seem like changing horses midstream. K.N. Balagopal and P. Rajeev have proven their mettle as parliamentarians and in the organisation. P.A. Muhammad Riyas happens to be Mr. Vijayan's son-in-law, and R. Bindu the wife of CPI(M) Acting State Secretary A. Vijayaraghavan. Both merit inclusion in their own right.

The crowd of 500 expected at the swearing-in ceremony today is, however, bad optics, in the midst of a pandemic which remains untamed in the State that is in lockdown. The new government has more challenges — a cyclone rained misery in the coastal areas this week, and fears of floods loom along with the monsoon clouds. The State's finances are in a shambles. The CPI(M) had replaced 22 sitting MLAs who had finished two terms with new

candidates in the election. Several senior leaders were already benched by this criterion. The party subsequently decided to nominate only fresh faces to the Council by way of reiterating the primacy of the organisation over individuals. Ironically, the choices also raise valid concerns of the increasing concentration of power in the hands of Mr. Vijayan. In a Council packed with newcomers, the CM will command such authority that an open discussion on any topic could be difficult. Given his complete sway over the party and the government, the onus is on him to empower the Ministers. Officials whom he trusted put him and the party in a spot many times during the first term. By restoring political consultations, including within the CPI(M), and keeping the bureaucracy disciplined, Mr. Vijayan could make his second term better than the first.

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