

## Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **distinct** (adjective) – clear-cut, definite, well defined, sharp, unmistakable.
2. **hold** (verb) – to have something.
3. **at times** (phrase) – sometimes, occasionally, now and then.
4. **comfort** (noun) – ease, content, well-being.
5. **continuity** (noun) – stability, constancy, continuance.
6. **incumbent** (noun) – the present holder or occupant of an office.
7. **theme** (noun) – subject, matter, concept, concern.
8. **myriad** (adjective) – a great number, countless, various.
9. **visible** (adjective) – recognizable, noticeable, distinguishable, discernible.
10. **appeal** (noun) – charisma, attraction, allure/charm, drawing power, fascination.
11. **empathy** (noun) – compassion, sympathy, feeling, concern, consideration.
12. **nationalism** (noun) – it refers to a system (with a narrow set of ideas) created by a group of people who believe their nation is superior to all others. It is also a perception of national superiority and an orientation toward national dominance- called chauvinism (excessive nationalism).
13. **apparent** (adjective) – evident/clear, visible, noticeable, recognizable.
14. **critic** (noun) – censurer, attacker, belittler, fault-finder.
15. **ideological** (adjective) – relating to a system of ideas.
16. **in contrast** (phrase) – when compared to another.
17. **arrest** (verb) – stop, halt, end, restrict, prevent.
18. **slide** (noun) – fall, descend, decline.
19. **gather one's wits** (phrase) – try to be calm and think more clearly in a difficult situation.
20. **yield** (verb) – produce, give, provide (results).
21. **expose** (verb) – reveal, show, display, exhibit, unveil.
22. **a chink in someone's armour** (phrase) – a weak point/fault in someone's character, arguments & etc., which can be used to attack/criticize them easily.
23. **robust** (adjective) – strong, powerful.
24. **resistance** (noun) – opposition, refusal, denial.
25. **mobilise** (verb) – bring (resources) into use for a particular purpose/cause.

26. **sub-nationalism** (noun) – support for interests of a particular region within a nation/country.
27. **rampaging** (adjective) – excessive, storming, uncontrollable, unrestrained.
28. **march** (noun) – progress, advance; procession.
29. **for now** (phrase) – for the moment, for the present, for the time being.
30. **bid** (noun) – attempt, effort, endeavour/try.
31. **fall short of** (phrase) – fail to meet/reach; be deficient/inadequate/insufficient.
32. **far** (adverb) – very much, considerably, markedly, significantly.
33. **boast** (noun) – bragging, self-praise, excessive pride, self-satisfaction, exaggeration, overstatement.
34. **obliterate** (verb) – destroy, wipe out, abolish, demolish, annihilate (something utterly).
35. **a force to reckon with** (phrase) – a person/thing with strong abilities and strengths cannot be ignored/underrated.
36. **so far** (phrase) – until now, up to the present, up to this point.
37. **necessarily** (adverb) – inevitably, certainly, surely.
38. **popular** (adjective) – public, collective, social, societal.
39. **crude** (adjective) – bad, defective, faulty, inferior; rude, offensive.
40. **communalism** (noun) – adherence/obedience to one's own ethnic group (against the principle/practice of living together in a wider society).
41. **deployment** (noun) – the bringing of resources into effective action.
42. **leave aside** (phrasal verb) – to not consider something; ignore, dismiss, push aside.
43. **incumbent** (adjective) – current, existing, present.
44. **strategy** (noun) – plan of action.
45. **costly** (adjective) – ruinous, disastrous, devastating, damaging, woeful/awful, terrible, unfortunate.
46. **in terms of** (phrase) – with regard to, regarding/concerning, in connection with.
47. **public health** (noun) – the branch of medicine handling public health; public health is also the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities through education, policy making and research for disease and injury prevention.
48. **credibility** (noun) – trustworthiness, reliability, dependability, integrity.
49. **institutional credibility** (noun) – It refers to peoples' acceptance of an institution based on their perceptions of that institutions' accountability, representation, legitimacy, transparency, fairness and justice.

50. (fourth branch) institution (noun) – the independent institutions, which are tasked with the protection of key constitutional values such as democracy, legality, impartiality, probity, human rights and price stability, are characterized as the fourth branch of the state, because of their distinctiveness from the three “branches”- the executive, legislature and judiciary. In the Indian context, institutions of the fourth branch include the Election Commission, Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, Central Bureau of Investigation, Reserve Bank, National Statistics Commission, National Human Rights Commission, Public Service Commission, University Grants Commission, Finance Commission, Niti Aayog and many others.
51. social harmony (noun) – when people live side by side in peace and mutual respect. (harmony (noun) – unity, solidarity, cooperation, agreement/concord).
52. bilateral (adjective) – involving two groups or countries.
53. ties (noun) – association, relationship, bond, connection.
54. maximalist (adjective) – relating to an approach of a person/organisation (particularly in politics) with extreme thoughts and not ready to compromise.
55. campaign (noun) – canvassing, electioneering, an act of soliciting (asking for/requesting) votes; an organized effort that seeks to influence the decision-making process within a specific group.
56. stare at (verb) – look fixedly, gaze.
57. explosion (noun) – sudden/rapid increase.
58. have one’s work/task cut out (phrase) – be faced with a tough task/work.
59. take note of (phrase) – pay attention, heed, take notice, observe, notice.
60. resentment (noun) – bitterness, indignation, irritation, enmity, hatred/hate.
61. rather than (phrase) – instead of.
62. read (verb) – interpret, understand, comprehend.
63. high-handedness (noun) – heavy-handedness, autocracy, absolute power, totalitarianism.
64. substance (noun) – significant subject, important matter/content, valid message.
65. reap (verb) – receive, obtain, get, acquire.
66. measure (noun) – action, step, procedure.
67. 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.

68. **slew** of (noun) – a large number of, lot, range.
69. **welfare** (noun) – a government program that provides (financial) assistance to individuals and families in need; social security, public assistance.
70. **live up to** (phrasal verb) – satisfy, fulfil, achieve, meet.
71. **inflame** (verb) – provoke, incite, arouse, whip up, kindle.
72. **passion** (noun) – strong emotion, feeling, vehemence, vigour.
73. **strategist** (noun) – someone skilled in planning action/policy (especially in politics/war).
74. **tussle** (noun) – fight, clash, contention.
75. **hiatus** (noun) – pause, break, interval.
76. **aid** (verb) – help, assist, support.
77. **strident** (adjective) – in an excessively forceful way; high-pitched, loud & harsh.
78. **in one's favour** (phrase) – to one's benefit/advantage.
79. **resilience** (noun) – strength; the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.
80. **flux** (noun) – instability, unsteadiness, unpredictability.
81. **at play** (phrase) – get involved/become engaged in something actively.
82. **outgoing** (adjective) – departing, leaving.
83. **beat off** (phrasal verb) – defeat, win/beat, overcome.
84. **mark** (verb) – indicate, represent, signify.
85. **departure** (noun) – deviation, change of direction, shift/change.
86. **anti-incumbency** (noun) – a situation which is against elected officials currently in power; discontent against ruling government/ party in power.
87. **render** (verb) – make, cause to be, cause to become.
88. **antediluvian** (adjective) – out of date, old-fashioned, outmoded, outdated.
89. **prey** (noun) – victim, target.
90. **acumen** (noun) – astuteness, shrewdness, sharpness, cleverness.
91. **considerable** (adjective) – substantial, appreciable, significant, much.
92. **daring** (adjective) – brave, bold, audacious.
93. **social engineering** (noun) – the act of tricking someone into divulging (revealing sensitive (or) personal) information or taking action usually through technology. It is to take advantage of a potential victim's natural tendencies and emotional reactions.

94. **ripple** (verb) – feeling or effect (spreading through someone/something).
95. **pay dividends** (phrase) – to cause good results; to bring an advantage.
96. **surge** (noun) – sudden increase or rise of something.
97. **command** (noun) – authority, control, power.
98. **eclipse** (verb) – outshine, overshadow, surpass, outclass.
99. **turn out** (phrasal verb) – happen, develop, end (in a specific way).
100. **grim** (adjective) – distressing, upsetting, worrying, unpleasant, dismal/awful.
101. **viable** (adjective) – reasonable, practical, logical, sensible, effective.
102. **disproportionate** (adjective) – inordinate, excessive, unreasonable, unfair.
103. **counterproductive** (adjective) – harmful, damaging, dangerous/destructive.
104. **freelancing** (adjective) – self-employed (instead of working for a organization).
105. **footloose** (adjective) – travelling, wandering, wayfaring, roaming.
106. **sobering** (adjective) – serious/sensible, thoughtful; realistic, pragmatic.
107. **prospects** (noun) – possibilities, chances, opportunities.
108. **ally** (noun) – partner, supporting (political) party (with common interests).
109. **notion** (noun) – idea, belief, opinion, view.
110. **nationalist** (noun/adjective) – relating to nationalism.
111. **straitjacket** (noun) – restriction, restraint, constraint.
112. **diversity** (noun) – existence/presence of different people (from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives ranging from race to age to gender to hometown to educational experience) within the group; variety, variance, difference.
113. **irresponsible** (adjective) – thoughtless, unwise, ill-considered.
114. **pursuit** (noun) – quest for, search for.
115. **taste** (verb) – experience, undergo, encounter, meet.
116. **extinction** (noun) – destruction, elimination, eradication, removal (a complete one).
117. **exclusive** (adjective) – not including, excluding, omitting, barring.
118. **worthwhile** (adjective) – valuable, helpful, useful.
119. **cleric** (noun) – a religious leader (of a Christian or Muslim Religion).
120. **hardly** (adverb) – barely, almost not.
121. **aggregate** (verb) – combine, consolidate, collect.

122. tally (noun) – total, count.

123. in the making (phrase) – promising, coming, developing, burgeoning, up and coming.

## Clear and distinct: On verdicts in Assembly elections

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### The verdicts in the Assembly elections hold different lessons for different parties

Elections present an opportunity for political change, but voters at times prefer the familiar comfort of continuity and reward performance over promise. Assam, West Bengal and Kerala have voted for the incumbents, while Tamil Nadu and Puducherry have voted for change. There is no one theme that can explain how the voters responded to the myriad political choices before them. Parties with strong and visible leadership might have the same appeal as leaders that show empathy for their daily struggles. While Hindutva nationalism won Assam for the BJP, in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, its limits became apparent. In fact, M.K. Stalin in Tamil Nadu, and Pinarayi Vijayan in Kerala, both known critics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, offered an ideological alternative to the politics of the BJP although it was not a direct contender for power directly in either State. In contrast, the Congress's efforts to arrest its slide and gather its wits did not yield much. The results have exposed more chinks in its armour, while regional parties offered robust resistance to the BJP.

In West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee mobilised Bengali sub-nationalism that stopped the rampaging march of Hindutva at the borders, at least for now. This was the first serious bid of the BJP for power in Bengal. Though it fell far short of its boasts, the BJP's rise is remarkable — from three seats in 2016 to 81 now. With the Left and the Congress nearly obliterated, the BJP is now a force to reckon with in the State. But what got it so far may not necessarily take it any further. In fact, the popular reaction against the BJP's crude communalism and deployment of its workers from other States was so intense that people left aside all their complaints against the incumbent Trinamool Congress government. The BJP's strategy for West Bengal has been costly in terms of public health, institutional credibility, social harmony and even bilateral ties with a friendly neighbouring country, Bangladesh. Though the BJP lost, the damage caused by its maximalist campaign cannot be easily undone. The State is staring at an explosion

in [COVID-19 infections](#), and Ms. Banerjee has her task cut out, entering into her third term as Chief Minister. She must take serious note of the public resentment against her party rather than read this victory as public approval of its high-handedness and corruption. The style and substance of the Trinamool's politics and governance must change for the better. In Assam, the BJP reaped the benefits of its government's proactive measures to provide relief to people badly impacted by the lockdown last year, and of a slew of welfare schemes. While the Congress-AIUDF partnership failed to live up to its promise, the BJP inflamed communal passions by suggesting that AIUDF leader Badruddin Ajmal could become Chief Minister if the alliance won. As the party's key strategist in the victory, Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will likely make a claim for the top post, and the BJP will have an internal power tussle to handle.

Mr. [Stalin led the DMK to power in Tamil Nadu](#) after a hiatus of 10 years. With his son also now an MLA, Mr. Stalin has taken full control of the DMK. His victory is not aided by any strident public resentment against the AIADMK government, and therefore can be considered a positive verdict in his favour. Moreover, the results also prove the resilience of Dravidian politics, modified to new challenges. Now in the Opposition, and its leadership still in a flux, the AIADMK will have to adapt to survive. There are other aspirants at play, and outgoing Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami might have to again beat off challenges from within the party to his leadership. In Kerala, the second consecutive victory of the Left Democratic Front led by the CPI(M) marks a departure from the anti-incumbency verdicts since the 1980s. For [Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan](#), the Congress, rendered aimless by its antediluvian leaders, was easy prey. But Mr. Vijayan also retained his support base through a mixture of political acumen and administrative measures. Having managed two floods and the pandemic with considerable efficiency, he also made some daring moves in social engineering that will continue to ripple. All that paid rich dividends for him, but the path ahead is going to be tougher as Kerala faces a fresh surge in COVID-19 infections. Finances are also challenging for the State. Mr. Vijayan's complete command over the party has eclipsed other leaders, a situation that can turn out to be a crisis in the future.

These results also hold some messages for national politics. For the Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi, this is a grim reminder that they have no viable politics at the moment. Mr. Gandhi spent a disproportionate amount of time and energy in Kerala. That turned out to be a

counterproductive strategy. The party lost Kerala and Assam, the two States it had a chance to win. Mr. Gandhi has to rethink his freelancing, footloose politics. For the BJP and its leaders, Mr. Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, these results must be sobering. In Kerala, the party scored nil, losing the lone seat it won in 2016; in Tamil Nadu, it might even have damaged the prospects of ally AIADMK. The notion that there can be a nationalist straitjacket into which the diversity of India will fit is irresponsible. They must consider a softer pursuit of power. The Left tasted historic victory in Kerala but faces extinction in Bengal. Experiments in exclusive Muslim politics are not worthwhile, the results show. The Indian Secular Front, founded by a cleric in West Bengal hardly had any impact; in Assam, the AIUDF and Congress appear to have failed to aggregate their individual tallies of 2016. The BJP might have lost more than it won, but Sunday's verdicts are no indication that a national-level alternative to it is in the making. That is still some distance away in time and effort.

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