Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **steep** (adjective) – sudden, sharp, rapid.
2. **climb** (noun) – growth, rise, expansion.
3. **count for** (phrasal verb) – be worth; have value/significance.
4. **count for little** (phrase) – relating to something which has little value/significance.
5. **singularly** (adjective) – remarkably, noticeably, particularly, extremely.
6. **drive** (verb) – force, compel, prompt.
7. **decade** (noun) – a period of ten years.
8. **agitation** (noun) – (public) protest.
9. **eruption** (noun) – outbreak, outburst, flare-up, upsurge.
10. **blockade** (noun) – barricade, barrier; obstacle/impediment.
11. (economic) blockade (noun) – disruption of the economic activities (e.g. supply of essential goods and others) of an area.
12. **ripple** (noun) – a certain feeling that spreads through (like a series of waves).
13. **autonomy** (noun) – self-government, self-rule, independence, freedom.
14. **foothold** (noun) – grip, anchorage, purchase, support.
15. **in favour of** (phrase) – in support of, to the advantage of, approve of.
16. **affinity** (noun) – empathy, rapport, sympathy; relationship, bond, connection.
17. **stake** (noun) – share, interest, involvement, concern (in a situation/system).
18. **in general** (phrase) – as a whole, generally, normally.
19. **ambiguous** (adjective) – arguable, debatable, equivocal, ambivalent; unclear, puzzling.
20. **stance** (noun) – position, approach, opinion, standpoint.
21. **segment** (noun) – section, portion, part, division.
22. **nominee** (noun) – candidate.
23. **campaign** (verb) – canvass, electioneer, solicit (ask for/request) votes.
24. **reiterate** (verb) – repeat, say again, restate.
25. stay away from (phrasal verb) – avoid, to not get involved in.
26. **contentious** (adjective) – controversial, disputable, debatable, disputed.
27. **frame** (verb) – formulate, plan, devise, work out, orchestrate.
28. **antagonistic** (adjective) – hostile, inimical, opposed.

29. **plain** (noun) – flatland.
30. **concession** (noun) – favour, right, privilege; granting of something.
31. **let alone** (phrase) – to say nothing of; not to mention.
32. **unsympathetically** (adverb) – disagreeably/objectionably, antagonistically, opposedly/inimically.
33. Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) (1988-2012) (noun) – Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), was set up under 'The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council Act, 1988' notified by the Government of West Bengal on 15.10.1988. The hill areas under DGHC comprised of the three hill Sub-Divisions of Darjeeling District, viz, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong and 13 Mouzas of Siliguri Sub-Division of that District. It allowed autonomy to the region and for the "social, economic, educational and cultural advancement" of the people of these regions. The DGHC was given executive power to oversee public works, health, agriculture, water resources, forest management and other administrative functions in these hills areas.
34. Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, 2012 (noun) – The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act, 2011 (come into force with effect from 15.03.2012) has provided for the establishment of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration for the region comprising the three subdivisions Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and some Mouzas of Siliguri subdivision in the District of Darjeeling. The objective is to establish an autonomous self-governing body to administer the region so that the socio-economic, infrastructural, educational, cultural and linguistic development is expedited and the ethnic identity of Gorkhas established, thereby achieving all-round development of the people of the region.
35. **mitigate** (verb) – reduce, lessen, decrease, make less severe.
36. **grievance** (noun) – complaint, criticism, problem, objection/protest.
37. **splinter** (verb) – separate, break away (into smaller groups).
38. **faction** (noun) – group, section, division (within a larger group).
39. **alliance** (noun) – association, union, partnership.
40. **set up** (phrasal verb) – establish, create, institute.
41. **ally** (noun) – partner, supporting (political) party (with common interests).
42. **lead to** (verb) – result in, cause, bring on, give rise to.
43. **erosion** (noun) – disintegration, deterioration, decline, undermining/weakening.
44. **suspicion** (noun) – misgiving, doubt/qualm, distrust, scepticism.
45. **bring** into (verb) – result in, cause, bring about, create.

46. **nationalist** (noun/adjective) – relating to nationalism.
47. **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).
48. **agility** (noun) – quickness, swiftness, dexterity, deftness.
49. **probably** (adverb) – most likely, in all likelihood, all things considered, perhaps.

Steep climb: On BJP and the Darjeeling hills
APRIL 17, 2021 00:02 IST

Darjeeling and Gorkha politics will test the BJP's vision for West Bengal and beyond

The three seats of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong in the **Darjeeling hills** of West Bengal may count for little numerically in the State Assembly of 294 members, but their political significance is a different story. The demand for a separate Gorkhaland State in the hills has singularly driven politics among the Gorkha population for more than three decades now. The agitation has been often violent. In 2017, during the last eruption of violence, the hills were in blockade for 104 days and several people were killed. The BJP's close involvement with Gorkha politics suggests that it has certain plans for the region, which could have ripples in other parts of the country where demands for autonomy or separate States exist. It was in Darjeeling that the BJP got its foothold into West Bengal. From 2009 to 2019, the region sent a BJP member to the Lok Sabha. The BJP's traditional position in favour of smaller States created an affinity for it, but more importantly, the fact that it had little stake in West Bengal politics in general allowed it to be experimental here. Though it never declared in clear terms its support for a separate State, by maintaining an ambiguous stance, it became acceptable to an expanding segment of the hill population. In 2014, then BJP prime ministerial nominee Narendra Modi said he shared the dreams of the Gorkhas, and the BJP later on shifted to a promise of 'permanent political solution'. Home Minister Amit Shah campaigned in the hills and reiterated the promise. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee stayed away from campaigning, avoiding the contentious question.

The politics in the hills is framed in antagonistic terms with the Bengali population in the plains. Any concession to the Gorkhas, let alone a separate State, can be viewed unsympathetically by the rest of the population. The two experiments in the past of allowing autonomy to the region under the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council from 1988-2012, and the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration established in 2012, more than mitigating the grievance of the Gorkhas, splintered their politics. The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha which dominated politics in the region is divided into two factions — one led by its founder Bimal Gurung and other by Binay Tamang and Anit Thapa. Ms. Banerjee's TMC is said to be in alliance with both factions, which means little more than creating confusion. The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), the party set up by Subhas Ghising who started the agitation, is an ally of the BJP. The experiments of alliances and self-governance led to an erosion of trust in local leaders. While Gorkha politics view Bengali leaders of all parties with suspicion, they have bought into the nationalist politics of the BJP to some extent. The BJP has emerged as a serious player in West Bengal and will remain so in the near future. Darjeeling will test its agility and vision, certainly for the State, but probably beyond its borders too.