

## Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. tortuous (adjective) – complicated, complex, confusing, overlong, lengthy.
2. surge (noun) – sudden increase or rise of something.
3. spectacle (noun) – display, show, event/scene.
4. overrun (verb) – invade, occupy, overwhelm, swamp, spread over (a place in large numbers).
5. agonisingly (adverb) – harrowingly, painfully, acutely, severely, intensely.
6. staggered (adjective) – phased; relating to something carried out/performed/pursued in stages; timed at intervals (of something as they don't happen at the same time).
7. add to (phrasal verb) – increase, amplify, escalate, intensify.
8. growing (adjective) – increasing.
9. regarding (preposition) – concerning, with regard/respect to, with reference to.
10. electoral bond (noun) – an electoral bond is designed to be a bearer instrument like a Promissory Note — in effect, it will be similar to a bank note that is payable to the bearer on demand and free of interest. It can be purchased by any citizen of India or a body incorporated in India. it allows limitless, secret donations to political parties, including (and especially) by corporations.
11. opaque (adjective) – non-transparent, hidden, mysterious, doubtful, ambiguous, cryptic.
12. instrument (noun) – mechanism, tool, medium, means (to achieve/attain something).
13. persistent (adjective) – continuous, constant, never-ending, incessant, relentless.
14. fairness (noun) – justness, impartiality, integrity, righteousness.
15. autonomy (noun) – independence, freedom, self-determination.
16. unprecedented (adjective) – not done or experienced before.
17. seizure (noun) – capture, takeover, appropriation.
18. influence (verb) – affect, have an effect on.
19. in the absence of (phrase) – without.
20. break-up (noun) – the division of something into separate parts; division, splitting up, partition, breaking up.
21. preventive (adjective) – preventative, precautionary, protective.

22. **measure** (noun) – action, step, procedure.
23. **opposed to** (adjective) – against.
24. **allege** (verb) – claim, accuse, charge.
25. **selective** (adjective) – choosy, picky, discriminating, particular.
26. **eagerness** (noun) – dedication, commitment, enthusiasm, zeal, keenness.
27. **central agencies** (plural noun) – the central agencies are organizations in the executive branch that co-ordinate the activities of, and provide guidance to the operating ministries and agencies; e.g. Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Income Tax Department (IT) and etc.
28. **turn up** (phrasal verb) – increase, raise, intensify.
29. **the heat** (noun) – pressure.
30. **turn up the heat on** (phrase) – to pressure/pressurize someone to do something.
31. **tilt** (verb) – change.
32. **tilt the scales/balance** (phrase) – to change the balance of a situation, so that one side is gaining advantage.
33. **periodic** (adjective) – regular, repeated, cyclical, recurrent.
34. **accountable** (adjective) – responsible, liable, answerable.
35. **hold someone accountable (for)** (phrase) – to consider someone responsible for something; blame someone for something.
36. **challenging** (adjective) – difficult, tough, demanding.
37. **ironically** (adverb) – paradoxically, unexpectedly, strangely.
38. **manipulate** (verb) – misrepresent, falsify, distort.
39. **escape route** (noun) – a preplanned means of escape from a dangerous situation.
40. **accountability** (noun) – responsibility, liability, answerability.
41. **in the midst of** (phrase) – in the middle of.
42. **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.
43. **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.
44. **in action** (phrase) – functioning, working, up & running.
45. **rally** (noun) – gathering, march/procession, meeting.

46. **mandatory** (adjective) – obligatory, compulsory, binding, required, requisite, necessary, essential.
47. **protocol** (noun) – procedure, convention, rules of conduct, guideline.
48. **spike** (noun) – a sharp rise/increase of something.
49. **affair** (noun) – event, happening, occurrence, phenomenon.
50. **campaign** (noun) – canvassing, electioneering, an act of soliciting (asking for/requesting) votes; an organized effort that seeks to influence the decision-making progress within a specific group.
51. **exponentially** (adverb) – rapidly, quickly, swiftly (in relation to an increase of something).
52. **likely** (adverb) – probably, presumably, no doubt, doubtlessly.
53. **herald** (verb) – signal, indicate, foretell, point to, spell, augur.
54. **pale** (verb) – dwindle, diminish, lessen, lose significance.
55. **magnitude** (noun) – intensity, immensity, proportions, extent, consequence, importance of something.
56. **unfolding** (adjective) – developing, evolving, happening, occurring, transpiring, emerging.

## Long and tortuous: On West Bengal Assembly Elections

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### End of multi-phase Assembly polls is a matter of relief after the surge in COVID-19 cases

With the **eight phase in West Bengal** on Thursday, a long and tortuous election process has concluded in four States and one Union Territory to the relief of most electors and candidates. The election spectacle was overrun by COVID-19 towards the end of the agonisingly staggered phases of voting. The current cycle has added to a growing list of concerns that have emerged regarding elections in India in recent years. If electoral bonds for making contributions to political parties emerged as an opaque instrument well before the current round of elections, a serious cause of worry through all the eight phases has been the persistent doubts over the fairness and autonomy of the Election Commission of India (ECI). The ECI made unprecedented seizures of cash and other items that were meant to be used to influence voters. In the absence of a party-wise break up of such preventive measures, parties opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have alleged that they were specifically targeted in search operations. The selective eagerness of central agencies in investigating crimes turns up the

heat on non-BJP State governments and parties, and during elections, this raised the possibility of tilting the balance in the contest.

Free, fair and periodic elections are an essential feature of a democracy. Elections are the ultimate opportunity for the people to hold their elected representatives accountable. Election cycles are usually not disrupted, even in challenging situations, for this reason. Ironically, elections can also be easily manipulated into an easy escape route from accountability. This set of Assembly elections in the midst of a pandemic did not generate any meaningful debate on public health or accountability. By denying the crisis in action and messaging, political parties contributed to the current surge in infections. The BJP was particularly irresponsible organising huge rallies, with people violating the mandatory health protocol. The spike in infections from that is already beginning. Considering the unprecedented situation of the pandemic, these elections should have been a quick affair, with limited campaigning. What happened was the opposite. Massive rallies continued even after COVID-19 numbers began to grow exponentially. These Assembly elections would most likely be remembered for worsening a health crisis than for heralding political change. The nature of the results, to be announced on May 2, will likely pale before the magnitude of the unfolding crisis.

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