

## Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **at stake** (phrase) – at issue, at risk; or in question.
2. **campaign** (noun) – an organized effort that seeks to influence the decision-making progress within a specific group.
3. **take place** (phrase) – happen, occur, transpire.
4. **can ill-afford** (phrase) – to prevent something from happening because it would be embarrassing and cause problems (if it happens).
5. **seek** (verb) – try, aim, attempt.
6. **mandate** (noun) – authority, approval, acceptance, ratification, endorsement.
7. **consecutive** (adjective) – successive, continuous.
8. **in the saddle** (phrase) – in a dominant/influential position; in a position of control; in a position of responsibility.
9. **meanwhile** (adverb) – for now, for the present, meantime.
10. **alignment** (noun) – alliance, partnership, union/bloc, affiliation.
11. **fragmentation** (noun) – breaking, separation, disintegration.
12. **passing** (noun) – death, demise, passing away.
13. **open up** (phrasal verb) – create (a new opportunity or possibility).
14. **possibility** (noun) – chance, probability.
15. **nationalist** (noun/adjective) – patriotic, loyalist.
16. **fancy someone's chances** (phrase) – to have faith in someone's talent and believe that he/she is likely to be successful.
17. **jostle** (verb) – compete, battle, struggle, scramble.
18. **scenario** (noun) – situation, background, context.
19. **far from** (phrase) – not, not at all.
20. **foothold** (noun) – grip, anchorage, purchase, support, firm contact.
21. **looming** (adjective) – appearing/emerging as a large/threatening one.
22. **influence** (noun) – power, authority, sway, control, leverage, weight.
23. **resonance** (noun) – reverberation, continuing effect, repercussion, ramification.
24. **sphere** (noun) – an area of activity; a field of activity; domain, realm.
25. **bounds** (noun) – confines, limits, extremities.
26. **menstruating** (age) (adjective) – relating to period, menstrual cycle; relating to the flow of blood that comes from a woman's body each month from puberty to menopause, except during pregnancy.
27. **quieten** (verb) – silence, stop, become quiet.
28. **backlash** (noun) – a strong negative reaction; adverse response, counteraction.
29. **constituent** (noun) – voter, elector, member of the electorate, member of a constituency.
30. **love jihad** (noun) – also called Romeo Jihad; "Love jihad" is a term used by right-wing activists to refer to the alleged campaign of Muslims forcing Hindu girls to convert in the guise of love. (guise means outward appearance or false show).
31. **matter of concern** (phrase) – something which causes worry.
32. **give yourself a makeover** (phrase) – to try to do a different thing and see a change in yourself.

33. **makeover** (noun) – transformation, correction, improvement, betterment.
34. **antithetical** (adjective) – directly opposed to, contrary to, conflicting with.
35. **custom** (noun) – convention, tradition, ritual, observance.
36. **rivalry** (noun) – competitiveness, competition, contention.
37. **swing power** (noun) – used to refer to “someone’s alignment is in favour of a particular (political) group”.
38. **fortunes** (noun) – circumstances (the success or failure of someone), state of affairs, conditions.
39. **ripple** (noun) – a certain feeling that spreads through (like a series of waves).
40. **thankfully** (adverb) – fortunately.
41. **centre around** (verb) – focus, concentrate, pivot, hinge on.
42. **communalism** (noun) – adherence/obedience to one’s own ethnic group (against the principle/practice of living together in a wider society).
43. **misogynistic** (adjective) – firmly biased against women.
44. **progressive** (adjective) – forward-looking, forward-thinking, dynamic.
45. **unfortunate** (adjective) – sad/regrettable, untoward, inappropriate, ill-timed/fated.
46. **put a cost/price on** (phrase) – evaluate, assess, estimate, appraise.
47. **offensive** (adjective) – hostile, attacking, aggressive, combative.
48. **welfarism** (noun) – the principles/policies of a welfare state.
49. **pay attention** (phrase) – heed, attend, be attentive, concentrate on.
50. **unsustainable** (adjective) – indefensible, undefendable, unjustifiable (pattern/method which disrupts the balance and then exhausts all of the resources).
51. **central agencies** (plural noun) – the central agencies like Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Income Tax Department (IT) and etc.
52. **seemingly** (adverb) – apparently, evidently, outwardly.
53. **constrain** (verb) – restrict, control, check, restrain.
54. **opponent** (noun) – rival, nemesis, combatant, competitor.
55. **vitiate** (verb) – destroy, impair, spoil, ruin.
56. **take note of** (phrase) – pay attention, heed, take notice, observe, notice.
57. **a level playing field** (phrase) – a situation in which everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to succeed, and no one has an advantage over the other.

## South phase: On the Assembly elections in TN, Puducherry and Kerala

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**Much is at stake for the Left and the Congress in Kerala, and for regional parties in T.N.**

The **States of Tamil Nadu** and **Kerala**, along with the **Union Territory of Puducherry**, are going to the polls today after an

extremely competitive campaign. Voting in all 234 Assembly constituencies in Tamil Nadu and [140 in Kerala](#) is taking place in a single phase. In T.N. and Kerala, the DMK and the Congress respectively, can ill-afford to lose another election. The AIADMK government in T.N. is seeking a third straight mandate while the CPI(M)-led LDF government in Kerala is seeking a second consecutive term. After being out of power for 10 years, the DMK hopes to be back in the saddle in T.N. Meanwhile, there is a search for new alignments in both States. The fragmentation of Dravidian politics, following the passing of Jayalalithaa of the AIADMK and M. Karunanidhi of the DMK, has opened up possibilities. Actor-turned politician Kamal Haasan and film-maker and Tamil nationalist Seeman also fancy their chances as they jostle for space in the changed scenario. Though the BJP is far from gaining a foothold in either State, its looming influence is evident in the resonance of religious appeals in the public sphere. In Kerala, the BJP and the Congress promised to keep the Sabarimala shrine out of bounds for women of menstruating age citing tradition while the LDF quietened its stance fearing a Hindu backlash. A constituent of the LDF said 'love jihad' was a matter of concern; in T.N., the DMK sought to give itself a makeover as a party not antithetical to customs and traditions.

In the rivalry between the Dravidian camps in T.N., the Congress used to be the swing power. Whether it retains that role is to be seen. With Rahul Gandhi's personal fortunes too at stake, the ripples of its performance in Kerala will be felt for the Congress across the country. The campaigns in T.N. and Kerala were thankfully not centred around communalism, but misogynistic statements by representatives of progressive parties were unfortunate. Parties and the people must put a cost on leaders who make offensive statements. All parties in both States appeared to support welfarism through various modes, but less attention was paid to discussing economic and development issues. Unless the focus is on growth, the incoming governments in both T.N. and

Kerala may find the present welfarism unsustainable. The role of the central agencies during the campaign was controversial for several reasons. True, it is their duty to investigate illegal activities, but if they do so in a manner that seemingly helps the ruling party at the Centre and constrains its political opponents during the campaign, the election gets vitiated. The Election Commission of India must take note of this increasing unhealthy trend, and do what is essential to ensure a level-playing field in elections.

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