

Course correction – Xi unlimited

With the presidential term limit set to go, Xi Jinping's rise takes china into a new era.

The Chinese Communist Party's proposal to **abolish** term limits on the **presidency**, and thereby allow Xi Jinping to stay on in power beyond 2023 when his second term ends, is not completely unexpected. When he was re-elected party chief and President for a second term in October, no one was projected as a **potential successor**. This was a break with tradition and **triggered speculation** about him remaining President Beyond the second term. Mr. Xi is arguably the most powerful leader of china since Mao Zedong. At the 19th Party Congress in October, "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" was written into the party charter, setting him apart from his recent predecessors. He does not just control the main pillars of the Chinese state – the party, the government and the military. In 2016, the party accorded him special stature by making him the "Core Leader". Just as Deng Xiaoping oversaw china's economic rise, Mr. Xi has raised its profile in global geopolitics. He has pursued a more **assertive** foreign policy in China's neighbourhood and launched massive infrastructure programmes across the world as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. But despite the power **amassed**, long term projects launched and his own apparent ambitions, the constitution was seen as a limit to his **stint** in power. With the latest proposal on removing the term limit, which is certain to be **endorsed** by parliament, Mr. Xi may find greater room for **manoeuvre** in speeding up the next generation of economic reforms.

The timing of the announcement itself, however, has taken many by surprise. Mr. Xi was about to begin his second term as President next month, and so has five years to introduce the constitutional changes needed. But with a proposal moved to amend the constitution a week ahead of a People's Congress convention, Mr. Xi has made it clear he does not want to leave anything to chance while **consolidating** his position. At present there is no rival power centre within the Communist Party to challenge Mr. Xi. But the centralisation of so much power in one individual, which is the **antithesis** of China's professed commitment to 'collective leadership', may well impact the power dynamics, given the succession battles of the past. The party introduced the term limit in the post Deng era principally to bring in order and stability at a time when China was becoming an economic power house. Two of Mr. Xi's immediate predecessors stepped down after their second term, having **groomed** the next generation of leaders, including Mr. Xi. By breaking with this pattern, Mr. Xi risks taking China back to the days of personality cults, internal power struggles and possibly **chaotic** succession.

WORD LIST

1. **Abolish** : (do away with or put an end to)
Synonym : abrogate, annul, cancel dissolve, eradicate, nullify, overthrow, overturn, put on end to, repeal, revoke, set aside, suppress, terminate, wipe out.

2. **Presidency** : (as in administration and government)
 (human or group who manages effort of an organisation)
 Synonym : board, bureau, cabinet, committee, department, executive, legislature, management, ministry.
3. **Potential** : (Promising, possibility for achievement)
 Synonym : hidden, likely, possible, probable, budding, future, imaginable
4. **Successor** : (heir)
 Synonym : replacement, beneficiary, descendant, follower, heritor, inheritor
5. **Trigger** : (cause to happen)
 Synonym : bring about, cause, generate, produce, prompt, provoke, set off, spark, start.
6. **Speculation** : (theory, guess) (risk, gamble)
 Synonym : belief, conjecture, opinion, thought, consideration, contemplation, supposition.
7. **Era** : (time period in history)
 Synonym : age, cycle, day, generation, stage, term, time
8. **Assertive** : (aggressive)
 Synonym : confident, decisive, emphatic, forceful, insistent, self-assured, self-confident, absolute, assured, decided, firm.
9. **Amass** : (gather, accumulate)
 Synonym : assemble, collect, compile, garner, hoard, stockpile, heap, pile, store.
10. **Stint** : (period of responsibility)
 Synonym : assignment, duty, job, spell, stretch, tour, bit, chore, share, participation, quota, task, turn, term.
11. **Endorsed** : (signed)
 Synonym : approved, backed, ratified, recommended, sanctioned, settled, supported, advocated, affirmed, attested, blessed, legalized, sponsored, upheld.
12. **Manoeuvre** : (more skilfully or carefully)
 Synonym : operation, activity, more, action, steer, guide, negotiate, direct, manipulate, work.
13. **Consolidate** : (combine, make firm)
 Synonym : build up, cement, centralize, concentrate, develop, fortify, reinforce, secure, solidify, stabilize, strengthen, unify, amalgamate.
14. **Antithesis** : (exact opposite, contrast, opposition)
 Synonym : antipode, contra, contradictory, contrary, converse, counter, inverse, reverse, antipole.
15. **Groom** : (make ready, prepare physically)
 Synonym : comb, educate, prim, tend
16. **Chaotic** : (utterly confused)
 Synonym : anarchic, disorganized, helter-skelter, lawless, turbulent, deranged, disordered, harum-scarum, purposeless, rampageous, riotous

Course correction – Ms. India

The entire Indian film industry was Sridevi's playground

Sridevi Kapoor Ayyappan, who passed away on Saturday, made her **debut** in cinema as a child artiste in the Tamil film Thunaivan in 1969. It was the same year that Amitabh Bachchan, more than 20 years her senior, faced the camera for the first time in Saat Hindustani. Even that early start does not take away from her remarkable **feat** of packing into her short life of 54 years almost 300 films and a career spanning five decades. More than the numbers, her career stands out for the **sheer** diversity of roles she played. Sridevi could not be restricted by linguistic or **territorial** boundaries. She could pull off Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam films with the same ease with which she ruled over the Tamil and Hindi film scenes. In this respect she **outdid** almost all her contemporaries, male or female. Sridevi is often credited with rewriting the rules of **stardom** and **wresting** the rightful space for the heroine in cinema. From Sivaji Ganesan to Nawazuddin Siddiqui, she acted with several generations of heroes and was that rare heroine to have starred as the lead with a real-life father and son, Dharmendra and Sunny Deol. But none of her superstar heroes – be it Bachchan, Shah Rukh Kha, Kamal Haasan or Rajinikanth – could achieve success in as many languages as she did. They were kings of their own **fiefdoms**, while all of India was her playground.

What she lost out on was childhood. Her first adult role happened at the age of 13, opposite Kamal Haasan and Rajinikanth, in K. Balachander's Moondru Mudichu (1976). Apart from Balachander, her other significant mentors were Bharathiraja and Balu Mahendra. Their complicated, moving love stories, 16 Vayathinile (1977) and Moondram Pirai (1982), did not just firmly **entrench** Sridevi in the Tamil film industry; the Hindi remakes Solva Sawan (1979) and Sadma (1983) forced the Hindi film industry to take note. It is widely agreed that her performances in southern cinema were far more organic than her glamorous turns in the north, be it Varumayin Niram Sivappu, Meedum Kokila or Kshana Kshanam. But she managed to display her **enormous** range in Hindi films too. She comfortably **swung** between parallel streams of critical and commercial hits in Hindi. She started off with **kitschy** song and dance routines in southern productions. Despite being initially unversed in Hindi, she worked hard on her way to the top. Chandni, Mr. India, Chalbaaz and Lamhe showed her versatility – drama, emotion, dance, comedy, even action. Sridevi may not have crossed over to international projects but her appeal went beyond India. Spontaneous outpouring of affection is expected when a young life is suddenly cut short. In her case it was also to do with the personal connect she established with individual viewers. Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam – in each industry she had a special place for herself. But the fact is that she couldn't be owned by any one; she belonged to all.

WORD LIST

1. **Debut** : (first public appearance)
Synonym : beginning, appearance, inauguration, introduction, launching, opener, entrance, entrée, initiation.
2. **Feat** : (achievement)
Synonym : accomplishment, adventure, deed, exploit, performance, stunt, triumph, victory, act, action, effort.
3. **Sheer** : (abrupt, steep)
Synonym : erect, precipitate, arduous, perpendicular, utter, absolute, thin
4. **Territorial** : (regional)
Synonym : provincial, national, sectional, areal
5. **Outdo** : (better, overcome)
Synonym : eclipse, excel, outclass, outdistance, outfox, outshine, outsmart, outstrip, surpass, transcend
6. **Stardom** : (fame)
Synonym : acclaim, celebrity, glory, greatness, immortality, popularity, prominence, recognition, renown, esteem, distinction, eminence.
7. **Wrest** : (snatch)
Synonym : exact, extort, extract, seize, wrench, wring, squeeze, take.
8. **Fiefdom** : (a territory or sphere of operation controlled by a particular person or group)
“a mafia boss who has turned the town into his private fiefdom”
9. **Entrench** : (establish, make inroads)
Synonym : define, embed, fortify, ingrain, strengthen, anchor, confirm, fence, implant, infix.
10. **Enormous** : (very large)
Synonym : colossal, excessive, gigantic, huge, humongous, immense, mammoth, massive, monstrous, tremendous, vast.
11. **Swing** : (move back and forth)
Synonym : curve, dangle, flap, fluctuate, hang, lurch, pitch, pivot, sway, turn, twirl, veer, whirl, wiggle, wobble, palpitate.
12. **Kitschy** : as in (garnish, gaudy) (flashy, tasteless)
Synonym : gaudy, glittering, ornate, ostentatious, showy, vulgar, brassy, cheap, flaunting, overdone.
