

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **keen on** (adjective) – interested in, wanting to do something, eager for, hungry for.
2. **tighten** (verb) – make stricter, make more rigorous, make more stringent, stiffen, toughen.
3. **grip** (noun) – control, power, hold.
4. **tighten your grip on something** (phrase) – start to control something more strictly.
5. **Special Administrative Region (SAR)** (noun) – a region in China that has a high level of autonomy. There are two SAR's in China, Hong Kong and Macau.
6. **serve** (verb) – do, perform; function/act as.
7. **gateway** (noun) – doorway, entrance; a means of achieving something.
8. **handover** (noun) – transferral, change.
9. **defy** (verb) – disregard, ignore, disobey; resist, take a stand against, confront.
10. **one country two systems policy** (noun) – the One Country Two Systems policy was originally proposed by Chinese communist leader Deng Xiaoping shortly after he took the reins of the country in the late 1970s. Deng's plan was to unify China and Taiwan under the One Country Two Systems policy. He promised high autonomy to Taiwan. Under Deng's plan, the Taiwan could follow Chinese capitalist economic system, run a separate administration and keep its own army but under Chinese sovereignty. (Courtesy : [The Hindu](#))
11. **autonomy** (noun) – independence, freedom.
12. **rambunctious** (adjective) – unrestrained, uncontrollable, ungovernable.
13. **noisy** (adjective) – vociferous, clamorous, tumultuous, talkative.
14. **pro-democracy** (noun) – in support of democracy.
15. **perhaps** (adverb) – maybe, possibly.
16. **judiciary** (noun) – judges.
17. **the judiciary** (noun) – a branch of government in which judicial power is vested.
18. **stark** (adjective) – clear, distinct, evident, obvious, striking.
19. **contrast** (noun) – difference, dissimilarity, contradiction.
20. **(Chinese) Communist Party (CCP)** (noun) – also known as the Communist Party of China (CPC); it is the founding and ruling political party of modern China, officially known as the People's Republic of China (PRC).
21. **deal a blow** (phrase) – harm, upset, or shock someone.
22. **blow** (noun) – shock, surprise; setback/misfortune.
23. **Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPCSC)** (noun) – the National People's Congress (NPC) is China's top legislative body. The Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPCSC) is the permanent body of the National People's Congress (NPC) of the People's Republic of China. Both the NPC and the NPCSC exercise the legislative power of the state.
24. **sweeping** (adjective) – comprehensive, all-inclusive, all-embracing, far-reaching.
25. **electoral** (adjective) – relating to electors/voters.
26. **significantly** (adverb) – notably, importantly, seriously, crucially.
27. **(SAR's) Legislative Council (LegCo)** (noun) – the legislative body for SAR's (Hong Kong and Macau).
28. **promulgate** (verb) – enact, pass, approve, lay down, stipulate, formulate.
29. **annex** (verb) – add, attach, join.
30. **Basic Law (Hong Kong)** (noun) – The "one country, two systems" principle is enshrined in a document called the Basic Law – Hong Kong's mini-constitution. That came into effect on 1 July 1997, the day British rule ended and the territory was returned to China. That agreement is only valid for 50 years.
31. **the legislature** (noun) – a deliberative body of persons, usually elective, who are empowered to make, change, or repeal the laws of a country or state.
32. **broadly** (adverb) – generally, usually, mainly.
33. **pro-establishment** (noun as modifier) – a person/group supporting the government.
34. **thereby** (adverb) – as a result of that.

35. [in perpetuity](#) (phrase) – forever, for always, for all time.
36. [establishment](#) (noun) – formation, creation, setting up.
37. [Candidate Eligibility Review Committee \(Hong Kong\)](#) (noun) – It is set up to review and confirm the eligibility of candidates contesting in an election for Hong Kong’s Legislative Council (LegCo).
38. [deem](#) (verb) – consider, regard as, view as; think.
39. [patriotic](#) (adjective) – nationalistic, loyalist, loyal.
40. [patriot](#) (noun) – nationalist, loyalist, flag-waver.
41. [administer](#) (verb) – govern, rule, manage.
42. [silence](#) (verb) – suppress, quell, repress, muffle.
43. [stringent](#) (adjective) – strict, severe, harsh, tough, rigorous, draconian.
44. [National Security Law \(for Hong Kong\)](#) (noun) – a new national security law for Hong Kong that would prohibit “acts of political secession (separation from a federation), subversion (overthrow/undermining government), sedition (illegal rebellion against the government) that seriously threaten national security and foreign intervention”.
45. [universal suffrage/franchise](#) (noun) – the right of citizens in a given society who are entitled to vote in an election without the discrimination of caste, class, colour, religion or sex.
46. [backing](#) (noun) – support.
47. [end up](#) (phrasal verb) – come/appear, find oneself (to a particular course of action in the end).
48. [count for little](#) (phrase) – if something counts for little, it does not have little value.
49. [in place](#) (phrase) – established, set up.
50. [assuage](#) (verb) – suppress, smother, stifle, quench, quell, check.
51. [hearts and minds](#) (phrase) – used in reference to emotional and intellectual support.
52. [representative government/representative democracy](#) (noun) – a government where citizens elect people to represent them and make laws on their behalf, instead of always voting directly on laws and other government actions.
53. [give up](#) (phrasal verb) – stop, discontinue, abandon, renounce, forgo.
54. [perception](#) (noun) – impression, observation, thought, belief.

Special no longer: On Hong Kong

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China is keener on tightening its grip on Hong Kong than on widening democratic space

Hong Kong, China’s Special Administrative Region (SAR), has served as the mainland’s most important gateway to the world for the past 24 years. Since its handover from British rule in 1997, the SAR has defied expectations that it would lose its unique identity. Unlike the mainland, the unique “one country, two systems” model guaranteed a high degree of autonomy and freedoms, including a free press, the right to protest, and a rambunctious political scene with a noisy pro-democracy opposition. Perhaps, most importantly, for the hundreds of multinationals, it also enjoyed an independent judiciary, a stark contrast from the Communist Party-controlled courts across the border. This week, Beijing dealt a blow to many of those unique freedoms. On March 30, the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress (NPC), approved sweeping changes to Hong Kong’s electoral system that will reduce significantly the share of directly elected representatives in the SAR’s Legislative Council (LegCo). President Xi Jinping signed orders to promulgate amended annexes to Hong Kong’s Basic Law, the constitution that has governed the SAR and ensured its autonomy, marking the biggest change since 1997.

While previously 35 of LegCo's 70 members were directly elected, that number has now been reduced to 20, even as the size of the legislature has been expanded to 90. The remaining 70 will be nominated from broadly pro-establishment groups, thereby ensuring a majority for the pro-Beijing camp in perpetuity. The most controversial change is the establishment of a Candidate Eligibility Review Committee to decide the eligibility of candidates and deem whether they are "patriotic" enough. Its verdicts cannot be challenged in the courts, the only standing independent institution. Beijing has justified the changes to ensure "patriots" were administering Hong Kong and as a response to the 2019 protest movement, which was silenced by last year's stringent national security law. The protesters had demanded universal suffrage, promised in the 1997 handover. That the protest movement had wide backing was clear in the 2019 district council elections, after which the pro-democracy camp ended up with 90% of the seats. That will now count for little, as the amendments no longer give district councillors a place either in LegCo or in the Election Committee. With the new change and the national security law in place, Beijing's grip on Hong Kong is tighter than ever. While Beijing may succeed in assuaging the business community's concerns with the continued attraction of the mainland's market, it remains no closer to winning the hearts and minds of Hongkongers. By reducing the space for democratic representation, Beijing appears to have given up efforts to do so, at least for now. That the changes are being framed by China as a historic political victory does little to change the perception.

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