

Important Vocab For the Editorial

1. **raise the bar** (phrase) – fix/make the standards (higher) that others to meet.
2. **churn** (noun) – disorder/disorganization, confusion, disruption/chaos.
3. **revival** (noun) – improvement, re-establishment; restoration/comeback.
4. **categorically** (adverb) – clearly/directly, explicitly.
5. **uncertainty** (noun) – doubtfulness, apprehension, quandary/dilemma.
6. **culmination** (noun) – climax, finale, conclusion.
7. **paralysis** (noun) – shutdown, immobilization, stoppage.
8. **rout** (noun) – defeat, overwhelming (very large/massive/huge) defeat.
9. **self-reflection** (noun) – serious thinking about one's own feelings.
10. **critique** (noun) – analysis, evaluation, assessment.
11. **introspection** (noun) – self-observation, self-analysis; contemplation.
12. **accountability** (noun) – responsibility, liability, answerability.
13. **stick to** (phrasal verb) – abide by, adhere to, fulfil.
14. **coterie** (noun) – gang, camp, faction/sect.
15. **flourish** (verb) – thrive/prosper; be well, be strong.
16. **predecessor** (noun) – previous holder of the post; forerunner, precursor, antecedent.
17. **manipulation** (noun) – manoeuvre, stratagem, intrigue/ploy.
18. **vested interest** (noun) – a personal interest in something to get benefit.
19. **reinforce** (verb) – strengthen, support, buttress/bolster up.
20. **self-seeker** (noun) – self-server, a person with self-obsession/self interest, egocentric person.
21. **electorate** (noun) – all the people who entitled to vote in an election.
22. **indictment** (noun) – charge, accusation, allegation.
23. **fortunes** (noun) – circumstances (the success or failure of someone), state of affairs, conditions.
24. **wane** (verb) – decline, decrease, disappear.
25. **plummet** (verb) – fall steeply/sharply, plunge, tumble.
26. **articulation** (noun) – statement/assertion, expression/statement, talk.
27. **reflective** (adjective) – thoughtful, contemplative, introspective.
28. **insurmountable** (adjective) – unconquerable, unassailable, unbeatable.
29. **clutch** (noun) – group, collection, set.
30. **power-broker** (noun) – an individual or a group of people who has a big influence & makes decisions on political/economic power.
31. **facade** (noun) – show, front, appearance.
32. **parasitical** (adjective) – exploitative, relying on others, living off another, slavish.
33. **seasoned** (adjective) – experienced, long-serving, veteran.
34. **reiterate** (verb) – repeat, say again, restate.
35. **resuscitation** (noun) – revival, restoration, rejuvenation.
36. **abound** (verb) – be plentiful, be abundant, be numerous.
37. **step aside** (phrasal verb) – withdraw, resign from (an important role/position).
38. **drag** (noun) – hindrance, burden, inconvenience.
39. **enterprise** (noun) – business, venture, undertaking.
40. **forbear** (noun) – variant spelling of **forebear**, ancestor, forefather, predecessor.
41. **notion** (noun) – idea, belief, conception.
42. **dynasty** (noun) – family, line, succession.

43. **helm** (noun) – in charge, in control, responsible.
44. **precondition** (noun) – necessary condition, imperative, requirement.

Raising the bar: on Rahul Gandhi's resignation

Rahul Gandhi has forced a churn in the Congress that might lay the basis for a revival

With Rahul Gandhi stating categorically that he would not continue as Congress president, one uncertainty that had gripped the party has ended. But this culmination does not end the disorder and chaos in the party, which is in a state of paralysis since its rout in the parliamentary election. Mr. Gandhi's letter of resignation is part self-reflection, about the Congress in general and his own personal role in it, and part a critique of the state of affairs of Indian politics. Mr. Gandhi felt the need for introspection and accountability, and restated his long-held position that he was in politics not for power but social change. By sticking to his decision to quit as party chief, he has thrown a challenge at his colleagues to find a life outside the shelter of the Nehru-Gandhi family. The coterie that flourished around his mother and predecessor Sonia Gandhi had reduced politics to manipulation and turned the party into an instrument of vested interests. A small club of self-seekers who reinforce one another and don't face the electorate had taken over the Congress years before Mr. Gandhi came on the scene. His letter is an indictment of these leaders, whose personal fortunes never waned, even as the party's plummeted.

Mr. Gandhi's limitation is not in his understanding of the challenges before the party or the country, or in his vision for both. His inexact articulation is not reflective of any insurmountable weaknesses. His real failure has been his inability to free the party from the clutches of what his father Rajiv Gandhi had famously called power-brokers. In calling for accountability, he is effectively asking a group to self-destruct for the larger cause of the party, which in turn must fight for the larger cause of the country. By refusing to be the façade for their parasitical existence, Mr. Gandhi might have forced a productive churn at all levels. Any moral appeal could only have had a limited impact on the seasoned veterans, but the example Mr. Gandhi set by accepting responsibility for the defeat while reiterating his commitment to the larger cause might help inspire a resuscitation of the party. But questions abound. Mr. Gandhi himself will remain active in politics, as he has made clear, but how much authority he would want to exercise remains an open question.

His insistence on stepping aside also comes from a realisation that the dynasty tag is more a drag than a booster for his politics, and the party, in the current environment. The process of reducing the Congress to a family enterprise had started with Mr. Gandhi's forbears and their supporters as much as their opponents. Only a family member could have sought to challenge the notion that the Congress cannot survive without the dynasty. If the absence of a Nehru-Gandhi at the helm was a precondition for the reconfiguration of the Congress and the formation of a viable alternative to Hindutva, Mr. Gandhi has created that situation.