

## **CDS General Bipin Rawat**

**PVSM UYSM AVSM YSM SM VSM ADC  
(16 March 1958 – 8 December 2021)**

It was a black Wednesday; a tragedy of cataclysmic proportions hitting the country and plunging a shocked nation into gloom and sadness. The Mi 17 V5 helicopter with four crew members carrying the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen. Bipin Rawat and 9 other passengers crashed near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu just five minutes before the landing.

Gen. Rawat was on a scheduled visit to the picturesque Wellington Defence Services Staff College (Training facility). General Bipin Rawat who joined the army in 1978 was the first Chief of Defence Staff of India and he assumed office on 1 January 2020. The 57th and last Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee as well as the 26th Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, General Rawat comes from a military family with several generations of his family having served in various capacities in the Indian armed forces. From handling anti-insurgency operations in the Eastern border to planning and executing the surgical strikes in the Western border, from leading the army in disaster management in the South to commanding the forces against a belligerent and hegemonic China in the North, Gen. Rawat has 'been there, seen that'.

At a time when the country is facing multiple challenges from forces inimical to internal and external security, the tragic death of Gen Rawat has robbed us of one of the best brains to lead the country from the front.

A detailed enquiry into the crash of the helicopter has been ordered and one hopes the enquiry will throw more light on the tragedy. While the lives lost cannot be brought back, the enquiry will prove to be a lesson for future operations and activities especially when it concerns persons of importance such as the CDS and the personal managing the office of the CDS.

The sudden demise of the CDS, his wife, as well as all the other personnel in uniform is a great loss to the nation, a void that can never be filled. As CDS he was instrumental in initiating a series of reform processes in the armed forces, defence management, cost-cutting and integration of the three forces to form a unified command. The best tribute for him would be taking his initiatives to logical conclusions as early and effectively as possible.

The Forum for Integrated National Security (FINS) offers its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of the departed souls.

Jai Hind!

# India thinks it's safe, but Russia is getting close to China. Non-aligned days should be back

**By Dr Seshadri Chari**

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Nostalgia, memories, and finer aspects of New Delhi's historic relationship with Moscow—dating back to the days of the Non-Aligned Movement—were revisited last week when Russian President Vladimir Putin came to Delhi with a long list of defence merchandise for sale. Besides the Quad partners, Russia now becomes the fourth country with which India will have a 2+2 format dialogue status. The six-hour summit between the leaders of the two emerging economies coming at a very significant time in the region ended with the signing of nearly 28 agreements and a joint statement.

The overwhelming emphasis on military hardware and strategic state-run projects—owned and operated by the respective states—is reminiscent of the public sector days during the non-aligned era of the Rupee-Ruble trade. India has moved far ahead and wound up most of its public sector undertakings, while Moscow continues to keep a strong government control over trade. New Delhi will have to overcome this mismatch and include more bilateral trade deals in the coming days.

Besides trade and commercial institutions, New Delhi has also moved away from the constraints of non-alignment by entering into bilateral agreements with the Quad countries and others on intelligence sharing—pertaining to logistics, security, and strategic maritime interests. Being part of the intelligence and security framework of the West will not go very well with the old and trusted non-alignment partner. How best the national capital is able to work with the two power structures with different timelines is yet to be seen.

Moscow's not-so-concealed willingness to sell military hardware to Islamabad gives strength to Pakistan's anti-India activities, ostensibly blamed on non-state actors present there. It is no secret that a bulk of Pakistan's military muscle is used against India and the groups in Baluchistan, who are seeking freedom from Islamabad and raising their voice against Beijing's unrestricted exploitation of their land and the Gwadar port.

New Delhi should be aware of Russia's engagements with India's adversary—or rather, *bête noire*—China. The two have a thirty-year energy security agreement settled between them. It includes an 8,000-km-long gas pipeline from Siberia to China. The Power of Siberia added a new 'Eastern' dimension to cross the border energy trade between Russia and China. Ironically, the agreement was activated in the first week of December 2019, exactly two years before Putin's Delhi visit last week. The geopolitical significance of the Russia-China camaraderie in the context of a strong Eurasia should not be lost on the strategic community in India.

As far as India is concerned, both China and Pakistan pose a great challenge to its security in the west and the north. In the emerging global order, it will have to align with countries that would be on New Delhi's side when the need arises. The Indian defence and security establishment has made no secret of its concerns. Air Chief Marshal V. R. Chaudhari has said, "China poses a significant and long-term challenge to India's strategic goals. Both the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) and the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) have enhanced their military capabilities in equipment and infrastructure."

**[Read complete article on The Print](#)**

# European Union's Cultural policies and the question of Mediterranean Greece: Commonality with Civilizational India and a joint 'Strategic' imperative

**Manish Barma**

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“You are an important member-state with the influence, I should say, to support us within the EU. At the same time, you are also, in many ways, a meeting point between many of our relations in Eastern Europe and Russia on the one hand and the EU on the other hand,” – Dr S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India

## Introduction

The above-quoted lines by Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar during an official visit to Greece in June 2021 mark a subtle yet significant change with regards to priorities and manoeuvrings of India's larger foreign policy matrix. 2021 also marks forty years of Greece's accession to the European Communities (EC), now known as the European Union, in 1981. This single incident is probably the most momentous political development in the country's larger history post-World War II. Accession has tangibly aided Greece in transitioning from being a weak and fragile democracy with a disjointed economy to becoming an example of the transformative influence of accepting a transnational setup like the EU. However, fast forward to this day and time, the future of Europe's security is subtly yet increasingly being played out in Greece. The crisis or rather, crises that engulf this Mediterranean nation does not stem merely from economic factors as is often perceived popularly, but rather from certain handicaps over the years of both Athens and Brussels to effectively map imminent challenges and address some fundamental structural issues with regards to their institutional inter-relationship. The challenges that confront the small Mediterranean nation, have multiple domains or characteristics, the very least of which is not the cultural sphere with its inherent and adjunct security and strategic interlinkages.

## Challenges and Turkey

Turkey, of late, has been pursuing an antagonistic approach, making irredentism and friction a key component of its overall foreign policy. Whenever existing conventions or rules do not further its purposes- as with disagreements and disputes over maritime boundaries, immigration issues, energy exploration projects- it creates rules unilaterally, while testing the resolve and response of the other side. Turkey is mostly dependent on Russia and Iran for its gas requirements. It could be well argued that diversification from its current energy-providing sources is a sine qua non as far as Turkey's energy security is concerned. However, the recent fall in prices of gas across the world coupled with the availability of liquified natural gases from several other sources has rendered the exploitation of deep-sea resources of gas less viable, realistically. To put it another way, mere ownership and use of gas fields do not seem to be the primary motive behind Turkey's current strategy in the eastern part of the Mediterranean.

The inducement for such a policy attitude is to be found in the following:

- i) The domestic political situation in Turkey
- ii) An enduring cultural discomfort

*Domestic Political Situation*

Opinion polls for the next presidential election in 2023 seem bleak for the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the party of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, which has been in authority since 2002. Since the change of constitution in 2017, the legislative as well as presidential elections of 2018, and the most recent municipal elections, President Erdogan's party has been steadily losing its long-established political dominance in the country.

Additionally, a series of ill-conceived decisions regarding economic and monetary policy- particularly on interest rates- has placed the Turkish currency, the 'lira' in a precarious position, notwithstanding the spending of over 50 billion dollars in hard currency reserves to cushion the state's currency. Turkey currently is facing an intense period of economic recession. Bankruptcies are piling up while the majority percentage of the domestic savings are being held in foreign currencies. The current situation calls for strict and urgent measures.

### *An Enduring Cultural Discomfort*

Also, what also fuels the current scenario, are certain narratives that the leadership is using. These emanate from a long history of cultural and religious strain between the Ottoman Empire, the predecessor to the modern nation of Turkey. Themes such as the "holy conquest"- referring to the conquest of Constantinople, today's Istanbul, in 1453- "unfinished war", return to "glory" among others are increasingly being used in the political parlance of the country. Relentless media campaigns, particularly social media, are employed around these subjects, combining them with the latest developments in the manufacturing and military industry, and energy exploitation and production prospects. Similarly, a significant level of cultural antagonism pervades Turkey's relationship with India too. To situate and trace its historicity, Mahatma Gandhi initiated and spearheaded the Khilafat movement against the British in 1919, for the eventual reinstatement of the Ottoman caliphate. This one particular movement often referred to and written about as being 'secular' and 'anti-colonial', among other adjectives, played a decisive role in communalizing the social and political constitution of Indian society in the 20th century and since.

Currently, the provocative nature of Turkish President Erdogan's sentiments against India can be seen in this very particular context. In essence, the Turkish state has metamorphosed into a near-complete autocracy with a non-existent independent media and a judiciary that is firmly under the control of the executive. Such a situation, by sheer definition, is the very opposite of the larger political culture of Europe and to a large extent, India, which stresses cordial neighbourly relations and a peaceful resolution of conflicts. Basically, Turkey as a political entity is now very far from what we know and read of as "Western norms". But problems are not the sole reserve of Ankara only. Beyond the clutter of apparent issues that the transcontinental nation faces today, there are certain relatively subtle yet critical issues that confront the Mediterranean country of Greece along with its institutional interface with the European Union.

### *A Glance at Greece- EU institutional Association*

Looking at the path of Greece's membership in the European Union, Athens has always preferred a heightened degree of integration with EU as changing circumstances demanded. Greece's fervour and narrative for forwarding political integration have never been equivocal. It has generally insisted on the "revolutionary" nature of the idea of Europe (as Konstantinos Karamanlis, a founding ideologue of the European idea in Greece, put it in 1979). The accession of Greece to the EC (European Community) would have been nearly impossible minus the efforts of the popular Greek leader Konstantinos Karamanlis. The starting submission for accession was signed in 1959 under his leadership- a process that culminated in the historic 'Association Agreement' between the EEC (European Economic Community) and Greece in

1961. However, the agreement was stalled following the military coup of 1967-68. But it was restarted again once a democratically elected government came to office in 1974. Concomitantly, Karamanlis returned to Greek politics and was elected the Prime Minister in June 1975.

The mid-1970s witnessed the aggressiveness of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) co-member Turkey, which invaded Cyprus then and had been occupying its northern chunk since, along with the prevalent sentiment of anti-Americanism in Greece in an era when the south-eastern part of Europe was divided along the ideological lines of the Cold War. As a response to this growing sense of crisis, Konstantinos Karamanlis, gave a positive voice to the aspirations of the majority of Greeks by charting out a pro-European path for his country, bolstered by a call for firming up the alliance with America. On a different plane though, by the time Greece became a member of the European Union in 1981, a system of patronage and clientelism had already set in. But then, both European and American leaders were not much concerned about that. What they essentially wanted was a pro-Western and stable country on the southern flank of Europe

### *Unfeasibility Of Status-Quo in A Fast-Changing World*

Stable as it was or it is, but far from being transparent, efficient, and democratic, the state institutions of Greece have functioned in an unsystematic manner ever since its accession to the EU and in fact, before. Officials and authorities responsible for generous sums of EU's structural and development funds meant for the modernization of the country's overall economy, infrastructure- as well as its public institutions- often have functioned in an accounted manner. Corruption has been rampant across regimes and none of them, for a long time, were willing to address these structural issues. The current crises in terms of economy and anti-EU sentiment among a section of the population essentially stem from the above-mentioned factors.

[Read complete article on FINS Website](#)

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## **China has taken the arms race to a different level**

**By Srikanth Kondapalli**

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China recently demonstrated an “assassin’s mace” weapon that has the US and Russia worried, for different reasons. For the US, China’s flight test of a manoeuvrable hypersonic glide vehicle upsets the strategic balance of power, while proliferation of such technologies through clandestine methods could undermine Russian security. Given the ongoing border stand-off and China’s refusal to de-escalate, such tests add fuel to the fire with India.

Hypersonic glide vehicles are manoeuvrable weapons that can deliver nuclear or other payloads at Mach 5-10 speed and strike anywhere on the earth within an hour. The combination of hypersonic speeds and manoeuvrability means that such weapons could spring a surprise on the adversary by evading its early warning systems and penetrate missile defence systems.

While China’s foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said in October that this was a “routine test”, the US Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall in November stated that an arms race with China is on – not necessarily for increased numbers of weapons but for qualitatively superior ones -- and that Beijing has been at it “very aggressively” for some time now.

While Russia underplayed China's tests as not violating any international treaty it has signed, it is concerned about losing ground on such technologies. Russia has several hypersonic test beds in Ayaks, Zircon, Avangard and Kinzal missiles. But it has made a spate of arrests of its scientists involved in hypersonic systems, including Anatoly Gurbanov, Valery Golubkin and Alexander Kuranov on charges of treason and transferring sensitive information.

Much of the R&D on hypersonic technologies is done by the China Academy of Aerospace Aerodynamics, along with China Aerodynamics Research and Development Centre. China's hypersonic vehicles include a glide-boost Dongfang-17 (that appeared in the October 2019 military parade at Beijing), a possibly air-breathing N-capable Xingkong-2 (tested in 2018) and other models.

China's missile technologies development was led by Qian Xuesen, an MIT and Caltech product, who developed the country's strategic weapons programme. The recent civil-military fusion programme channelised civilian talent into developing such technologies. The "thousand talents plan" since 2007 likewise recruited scientists from abroad, including from the US.

China transitioned from passive missile interception technologies in the 1980s to active mode in the last decade, ironically based on US and Russian inputs, surreptitiously acquired over a period of time. The Cox Report accused the US space company Loral & Hughes, for instance, of transferring satellite guidance systems to China in the 1990s. Many Chinese scientists involved in hypersonic technologies work with their counterparts in the US and Russia.

China's tests are worrying the international community as it has been a free rider so far, with no responsibility in regional and global orders. China is not part of the strategic arms reduction pacts between the US and Russia and has embarked on increasing its nuclear warheads. Recent reports say China has increased the number of missile silos at Yumen and Hami in its western region.

Nor is China part of the Missile Technology Control Regime, and it has been involved in proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to several countries, especially Pakistan.

[\*\*Read complete article on Deccan Herald\*\*](#)

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## **Anti-Incumbency**

**By Sanjay Sahay, IPS**

Author is an IPS officer of 1989 batch, Karnataka Cadre, who took VRS in March-2020, is an alumni of Delhi's prestigious St. Stephen's College. Post retirement, in his new role as a Tech Entrepreneur he is now the Founder Director of TechConPro Pvt. Ltd – World's first Technology Consultancy Aggregator.

When failure is anticipated in the opportunity provided to deliver, as a foregone conclusion, anti-incumbency gets birth as a concept. Though incumbency is a well-established way of expressing anything related to the incumbent, anti-incumbency as a well-established parlance exists only in politics. Does anti-incumbency not happen in other sectors, where incumbents have grown from strength to strength and have taken organizations, institutions and projects to glory.

There is direct correlation with the number of years a person heads the organization and his contribution and delivery. Only if he is capable does he continue beyond a point. Might be he asked or made to head only for that reason. The main issue is ownership, do you own the job you do and the results of it and that does not happen in politics. When the whole of the state machinery is under your command and you have the resources and the methodology of delivery and govern, then how can you fail?



This is the biggest riddle of governance and if not deciphered, deliberately or otherwise, it will keep coming to bite in every election for every single political party and for all times to come. When you know your fate few years down the line and still don't react to harsh realities of governance, you have already accepted, that you are a non-deliverable and if something good happens, it can be either be a fluke or chance or one odd good Samaritan working behind the scenes and somebody else trying to bask in that glory. Good governance with clear cut deliverables is the best way to exist in the game called elections. If any party is able to really fulfil a major component of its manifesto, it will keep coming back to power. But who is interested in that? What is the difference in bringing to life a Metro Project like Delhi and providing quality education in schools?

Quality education is just one of the parameters of governance, it can be reached through great amounts of difficulty and then has to be sustained with even greater difficulty. Anti-incumbency is happening when barely any parameter of our existence doesn't get scrutinized by the electorate in any election whatsoever. If human development indices become the main agenda of the nation, then the political parties would scoot from the political arena.

They would then be born into anti-incumbency. Anti-incumbency also means that the electorate is on a fun ride, changing the governments. Or does it mean that the electorate is desperately trying for someone who can come to their rescue. Does it mean that the political parties have decided not to do anything and also feel that it is better to face anti- incumbency, than make serious effort and deliver. Which party has the acumen to supervise government delivery to transform our existence; this is the crossroad where we are today.

Anti-incumbency has become a well-established formula in the political landscape of this country and a very acceptable one. They might have arrived in different ships, but they are all in the same boat. Government doles of every type is used by our leaders as an antidote to anti-incumbency. Finding an escape route for non-delivery is known as anti-incumbency.

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## **Nation is Indebted to: Tulsi Gowda**

Tulsi Gowda is an environmentalist from Honnali village, Ankola taluk in Karnataka state. Despite having no formal education, she has made immense contributions towards preserving the environment. Her work has been honoured by the Government of India and various organizations. She is also known as the "Encyclopaedia of Forest" for her ability to recognize the mother tree of any every species of tree.



Gowda was born in 1944 into an impoverished family in the Honalli village of Uttara Kannada, Karnataka. Her father died when she was only two years old. From a very early age she has to support her

mother in day today work, as a day labourer at a local nursery, prohibiting her from ever receiving a formal education. As a result of her lack of education, she is illiterate, not able to read or write. At a young age she was married off to an older man named Govinde Gowda. Her husband died when she was in her 50s.

She worked at a nursery, where she was responsible for taking care of the seeds that were to be grown and harvested at the Karnataka Forestry Department, and she specifically cared for the seeds that were meant to be a part of the Agasur seedbed. Gowda continued working at the nursery alongside her mother as a daily wage worker for 35 years until she was offered a permanent position in recognition of her work towards conservation and extensive knowledge of botany. She then worked at the nursery with her permanent position for 15 more years before she decided to finally retired at the age of 70 years.

In 1986, she received the Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award, also known as the IPVM award. The IPVM award recognizes pioneering and innovative contributions made by individuals or institutions in the field of afforestation and wasteland development.

In 1999, Gowda received the Karnataka Rajyotsava Award, sometimes known as the Kannada Rayjotsava Award, and it is the "second highest civilian honour of the Karnataka state of India. Gowda was 1 of 68 people to receive this award and she was 1 of 2 people to receive it for contributions to the environment.

On 26 January 2020, she walked barefoot to stage to receive the prestigious Padma Shri award from President of India. After winning the award, Gowda reaffirmed her purpose for her actions by saying that while she is glad to have received the Padma Shri, she "values the forests and trees more".

Tulsi Gowda is known by environmentalists as the "Encyclopaedia of Forest" and by her tribe as the "tree goddess" because of her extensive knowledge of forest and all of the plants that grow within it.

Gowda is estimated to have planted in the range of one lakh (100,000) trees in Karnataka on her own. These contributions have made a lasting impact on the members of her community as well. Nagaraja Gowda of Uttara Kannada District, who works for the welfare of the Halakki tribe, says Tulsi is the pride of their community stating "she has invaluable knowledge of the forest and medicinal plants. Nobody has documented it and she is not a good communicator, so it is difficult to understand her contribution unless you've seen her work."

Yellappa Reddy, a retired officer, also commends Gowda's lasting commitment to her community, citing the fact that Gowda has planted and identified over 300 medicinal plants that have since been used to treat ailments within their village.

Although Gowda has retired from the Karnataka Forestry Department, she has dedicated the rest of her life to teaching the children of her village about the importance of the forest as well as how to find and care for seeds.

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