

THE BULLETIN

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Lt Gen V M Patil, PVSM, AVSM

Vice President of FINS

28.05.1938 - 10.12.2022

*It is with deep sadness and heavy hearts that we inform the death of Lt Gen V M Patil, PVSM, AVSM
Vice President of FINS who passed away on 10 Dec 2022.*

*Gen Patil was a veteran of 1962 India- China war and 1965 India-Pakistan war He was the first Defense
Advisor in Indian Embassies in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.*

He was Commander of United Nation's Military Observers Group in IRAQ and IRAN.

In his death nation has lost a great Strategic thinker of international standing.

We all in FINS, will miss him more than words can express.

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China's Protests Diminish Xi Jinping's Authority

By Pratap Bhanu Mehta

Author is Contributing Editor at the Indian Express.

It is a cliché about protests in authoritarian societies that they appear unlikely *ex ante*, inevitable in retrospect, and uncertain in the train of events they unleash. But, based on preliminary assessment, the widespread protests against China's Covid policy are unprecedented and will test President Xi Jinping's authority. In all likelihood, the protests will be quelled with a combination of repression and some concessions. But in significant ways these protests have already challenged the authority of Xi.

Protests in China are not new. For years, the Chinese state used protests as a safety valve and an information conduit, a way of identifying fault lines in society and responding to them. Most of those protests did not dent the authority of the Communist Party. They were used to strengthen it. But that strategy had four assumptions.

First, the issues taken up in the protest were usually very specific. Second, they worked in a system of relative decentralisation, where the protests could be taken as an indicator of local performance, while the central leadership could step in as a knight in shining armour. So, traditionally, in surveys, distrust of local government was always much higher than central government. Third, the protest was used as information. But the guiding assumption was that the central leadership had some kind of knowledge authority that was in a position to correct errors. And the fourth, was the ability to control the information order enough to stop any possible contagion effects.

All four assumptions are being tested in these protests. The first is harder to gauge. The protests are ostensibly against Covid policies. In some places they are becoming a magnet for other grievances including labour rights and curbs on freedom. But we have to be very cautious in assessing the scale and grammar of these protests. But the fact that China has become more centralised is a problem for Xi. Though local governments institute region-specific policies, there is no doubt that the failures of Covid policy will be attributed entirely to the central government. The spectacle of Xi's politburo being entirely constituted by "yes men" also suggests that channelling up discontent through party channels is no longer considered an easy option. Ironically, the successful consolidation of power at the top takes away the possibility of engaging with alternative viewpoints within the system. Perhaps the people are willing to see this.

Xi cannot displace the blame to protect his own aura. But most importantly, the protests have dented Xi and the leadership's epistemic authority. The protests are a statement that the leadership is not in a best position to judge what trade-offs are appropriate. They cannot endlessly use people as fodder for its own preferred targets. The regime cannot disguise its failure to vaccinate or prepare the health system enough to open up. And ironically, increasing ambiguity about on the ground policies may have made the situation worse. With steep slowdown in economic growth, this authority will be challenged further. Even if Xi cracks down, this dent in authority might surreptitiously work itself out in the party over the coming few months.

And, finally, there is control over the information order. Despite censorship and propaganda, two lessons are clear. It is impossible to suppress or distract from information in the long run: One uncensored shot of a football World Cup game being watched without masks can trigger emotions. It is also a reminder that closed societies that put nationalist pride over the wellbeing of people run risks. In this case, China's refusal to use vaccines made elsewhere left it vulnerable to a larger lockdown. There is no direct line from economic development to political freedom, but the modern world does require space for personal freedom that political orders challenge in the long run at their own peril.

Whether the protests are sustained depends on a number of things. First, the dynamics of contagion effects cannot be predicted. Could a precipitating incident galvanise more protests, or does the fear of anarchy lead to holding back? Major changes almost always come as a surprise because of the dynamics of collective action. But it is equally sobering to remember how most protests end up being domesticated or repressed. The second issue is elite cohesion. In protests that lead to major upheavals, usually there is a crack in the power elite that allows popular protest to channel up into change. This seems unlikely at the moment, partly because Xi has marginalised anyone with independent authority. Third, a lot depends on how Xi responds. Tactful concessions and some targeted repression may work. Giving concessions may not be as significant a loss of face as everyone assumes. The greater danger is Xi appearing indecisive, as, in fact, he has in his management of Covid. But he does have a problem that he is stuck with Covid — opening up risks steep rise in infections and deaths. But a lockdown is not sustainable either. We also don't know how the generational divide might work out in this — the protest seems to be led by young people — and Xi may have to do a balancing act. But it would be out of character for this regime not to want to reassert its authority very quickly. Even in 1989, where there was arguably more elite division, the revolt was snuffed out. And the analogies with Arab Spring are a bit far-fetched, since the Chinese state has deeper social roots.

These protests have global implications. The global mood affiliation about democracy will undergo a shift. Democracies might be in crisis. But authoritarian regimes are in a deeper crisis. The protests underscore the fact that demands for a fair degree of personal freedom, freer information, or that governments justify themselves to their citizens are not parochial cultural values. But the economic and strategic implications of this shift are uncertain. Is a Xi regime, with its authority dented, more likely to mobilise nationalism and assert Chinese power on the international stage? Does it feed a greater conspiratorial mind set about regime change being instituted from the outside? Or does it make him more risk averse?

The challenge for Xi is that with his authority dented, he cannot easily pivot to a new domestic narrative to reclaim aura for the party. Reclaiming the economic high ground will not be easy, as the Chinese state did after 1989. So, you might be looking at the regime with immense power but increasingly unsure of its own authority, a deadly combination. The protests may not change the regime. But as good political action does, they will rupture the aura, self-confidence and presumptuousness of the regime. Nothing is more democratic than that.

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G-20 Summit And Chairmanship

By Dr.Santhosh Mathew

Author is Assistant Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, Pondicherry Central University.

India has got the opportunity to lead 'Global South' by being the host nation for G 20 which consists of Asia, Africa and Latin America when 'Global North', an alliance of developed nations like America, Russia and Europe, shivers in front of a dilemma. The country has already made it clear that the main agenda will be 'Data for Development' when India comes to the leadership role. Developing nations got only four chances to preside over G-20 after the global recession of 2008. Mexico in 2012, China in 2016, Argentina in 2018, Indonesia in 2022, India in 2023, and Brazil in 2024 and South Africa in 2025 will be presiding over G-20 approximately.

The two days of conclave which was held in Bali, Indonesia, concluded when Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over the presidency of G-20, the strongest group of economic forces.

Mr. Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia, handed over, 'hammer,' a symbol of presiding nation for the coming year to Mr. Modi at the end of the summit. India will reach the presidency on the 1st of December. Mr. Modi said that with the combined effort of all the member nations, the group could be transformed into a channel for the welfare of the whole world. The priority in the coming one year will be to assure that everyone gets access to the digital services when India will be holding the presidency. The Prime Minister also said that the slogan, 'One earth, One Family and One Future', points to peace and mutual understanding. Two days of G-20 summit ended on Wednesday, 16th November. Indonesia which was the host nation of 17th summit held 'Recover together, Recover Stronger' as the main slogan of the summit.

India's leadership period is from 1st of December 2022 to 30th of November 2023. The summit is held in November normally, but it will be held from 9-10 September 2023 in India. It will also be the first time that the presidents of these important countries will be coming together to India. The summit will be held in Delhi. More than ten thousand representatives will be arriving for the summit. Mr. Modi held discussions with Mr. George Melony, the Prime Minister of Italy, Mr. Antony Albanese, the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Rishi Sunak, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mr. Joe Biden, President of America, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, Mr. Macky Sall, and President of Senegal, who came to attend the summit. Mr. Shi Jinping, the Chinese Premier and Mr. Modi shook hands with each other and had a brief conversation. It was the first meeting of the two after the intrusion of the Chinese into Indian border in 2019. There was a declaration that Russia should immediately stop the attack on Ukraine and that they should withdraw from completely in the summit. The declaration which was approved unilaterally includes the words of Prime Minister Modi to Mr. Putin, the Russian President that 'this age is not of war.' America demands that Russia should be dismissed from G-20. But, as Russia is a friend of India, the decision to recall all the procedure to impose sanctions against Russia, is seen as a victory for India.

G-20 is the group of the strongest nations of the world. There are more than 20 members even though the given number of nations is twenty. This group includes 19 nations and the European Union. 66% of the world population is in these countries. The members of this group hold 85% of the world GDP and 75% of trade. The importance for India about G-20 summit held in Bali, is that India is promoted to preside over it.

G-20 members are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, The United Kingdom, the United States, European Union (there are 27 countries in European Union). Other than G - 20 countries, Spain, UAE, Singapore and the Netherlands are permanent invitees. The host country can invite a few more countries for the summit. India has invited Bangladesh, Egypt, Nigeria, Oman and Mauritius.

This organization has grown to the status of a platform where not just the economic matters are discussed but the safety of the whole world, food security, energy, environment, public health and even the start-ups as well. Another peculiarity is that it does not have a permanent head office. Presidency will be changing from one nation to another in turn. That is how India got this position. India defines herself as the representative of the underdeveloped countries (Global South). India's 'G-20 Sherpa' is Amitabh Kant. G-20 organizers who guide the world leaders are called as 'Sherpa'. India will hand over the presidency which she has taken over from Indonesia to Brazil next year. There is another speciality still now that three nations from the 'Global South' are taking the leadership for G-20 continuously. India had prepared the plan for LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment) which is aimed at resolving the environmental issues before taking up G-20 leadership. The aim of this is to make the consistent lifestyle as the global initiative. When the whole world was facing recession in 2008 and that it had to confront the climate change united,

G-20 became an organization which had to get involved in other areas, than one that is only an economic one but with regard to policies and make a consensus. With that G-20 started discussions in two groups called finance track and Sherpa track about diplomacies. Climate change, culture, tourism and energy are all in sherpa track. G-20 group gives a strong message of peace and unity. G-20 includes all these ideas when she reaches the leadership of it with the slogan 'One Earth, One Family and One Future.

What We Discuss, Is What We Are!

By Sanjay Sahay

Author is former Police Officer of Karnataka. Now he is Founder & Director of TechConPro Pvt Ltd., Bengaluru

The truism of our lives, both professional and personal, is that what we discuss, keep on discussing, clarifying and fine tuning is what we finally achieve. It develops both familiarity with the topic and also an interest, which keeps on increasing as we keep harvesting the fruits of it. If you are a practitioner, you improve upon the practice, that gets you a good name, fame and most of the times money as well. If you a person of knowledge and wisdom, you get to know more and more on the topic and the subject and you become a guiding light in that specific field. If you the person who has do deliver projects, promises, schemes, programs and policies in that area, you will do it much more proficiently compared to the ones who don't discuss.

Democracy is all about translating promises into tangible projects into real life products, services, amenities, opportunities, business products, better living, better economic prospects, international standing etc. Can all this happen without discussing and discussing incessantly, till the time the cows come home, or the goal is accomplishment. Discussion is at the core to human existence and it cannot be mixed with business meetings and lots of other such engagements. The agenda of the meetings and MOM have not taken us anywhere. Governments after governments have exceled in such acts, but why has the memory become so frail, that they can barely remember anything.

If you don't remember something or an issue; its niceties and the trajectory, how far can you go in achieving it. The issue is very simple, that we don't discuss any of these issues. May be these are treated as official and can be born and consumed in that format itself, is the running thought process. Do you remember the discussions of any big fat Indian wedding or any wedding for the matter, you have been a part of? It is difficult to forget. Most of us remember for all our lives. It was because the discussions were so intense and meaningful, that has the capability to finally get translated into a project or an event and becoming hugely successful. The earnestness of knowledge of that field, the interest in it, finding the best workable solution and an outstanding delivery is at the core of the discussions which we are talking about.

If a marriage was to be performed on the basis of our public domain discussions, one can be sure of the fact, that such marriage could have never been performed. Discussions need some level of knowledge, ability to garner more as required, be able to prove your point of view with all substantiation, in a meaningful manner. The concerned person would be more than happy to take it to its logical conclusion, that being real-life delivery. Being fully accountable to what you deliver in a discussion is at the core of its utility.

What does our discussions revolve around? The electronic media – same persons sans any expertise colouring every issue with the same brush, social media even abuse is the name of the game, for bureaucracy it is meetings – or discussion and diktat going undifferentiated, the academicians and researchers are happy with their classes' sans discussion, ppts, thesis, funding and CVs. Regarding the legislatures the less said the better, they can even make mikes and furniture speak, the garbhagriha of democratic discussion. Have we lost it all because we lost the art, science and practice of discussion.

DEMOCRACY CAN GUIDE THE NATION ONLY THROUGH DISCUSSION.

China Churning: Can Xi Jinping Retain Premiership Amid Protests & Party Crisis?

By Srikanth Kondapalli

Author is Dean of School of International Studies and Professor in Chinese studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

From COVID to Economy, China is witnessing its strongest resistance since the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989.

In an unprecedented development since the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, China is witnessing a series of pitched battles across the country between the commoners and the authorities on the debilitating restrictions imposed on people for the past three years in the name of controlling the pandemic.

At the last count, the protests have spread to over 25 cities and over 80 universities, totalling over 50 since the last week of November when nearly a dozen residents were charred to death at Urumqi in Xinjiang in a locked-down high-rise building that caught fire.

COVID Protests Echo Tiananmen Square Movement

Moreover, the communist party was split vertically between pro-student leaders like Zhao Ziyang and hardliners like Li Peng. Today, while political tensions exist between rival factions in the communist party such as the “New Zhijiang Army” of Xi Jinping and the Communist Youth League of Hu Jintao and Li Keqiang, the protests have not divided the crucial party centre yet.

China witnessed “mass incidents” periodically after the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989. According to official estimates, over 5500 such incidents were reported in 1991, rising continuously to over 87,000 in 2005 and to 1,80,000 in 2010. However, China’s Premier has discontinued providing such statistics anymore.

The protests continued as the economic growth rates declined in the past decade from nearly 10 percent to an estimated 3 percent for this year. The crisis of confidence in the party-state is also that while it promised to maintain economic growth rates if students do not question the party’s legitimacy, such high growth rates have vanished in thin air.

Pandemic Control or Political Crackdown?

Given the nature of the surveillance state in China and other repressive mechanisms like the “social credit” system, it would be hard to think of scores of people joining any protest in China today. However, the fact that many people ranging from students to workers, ethnic minorities to Han Chinese were participating in large numbers not only indicated that COVID control mechanisms have enraged a large section of the population but also the ability to express openly their dissent to the top powers.

Also, despite the domination over the cyber domain and curbs on social networking sites in China, many have utilised such channels to assemble and organise protests across the country. Even though such protests remained decentralised and devoid of backing, funding, and nationwide networks, the fact that they were able to spread like wildfire indicates the growing political dissent in China and the limitations of the authoritarian regime.

For the newly anointed Xi Jinping with a third term at the 20th party congress this October, the widespread political protests across the country are challenging if not unnerving. While Xi enjoys an absolute majority in the crucial party hierarchies, the protests tend to undermine his political authority and in the medium term, his legitimacy.

What Is Xi's Strategy To Retain His Term?

Even though there is no imminent threat to Xi's political leadership, despite some slogans in this regard by the protestors, he is expected to broad-base his appeal to the public for any meaningful solution to the problem at hand. Xi had earlier jettisoned rival factional leaders like Li Keqiang, Wang Yang, Hu Chunhua, and others from gaining a foothold in the politburo standing committee. Now, he needs coalition partners to douse the protests across the country.

Xi also faces the dilemma of the intensity of the crackdown on the protestors and could easily stamp out dissent, given the overwhelming internal security build-up in China for the past several decades. In fact, today, China has more internal security budgetary allocations than on the defence sector. The nature of surveillance has also been sharpened. However, the more the repression, more is the intensity of protests likely in the current context, thus, creating regime security anxieties.

In such a scenario, rethinking the "dynamic zero-COVID" policies earlier reiterated at the 20th party congress in October, might be Xi government's best bet.

[Read complete article on website thequint.com](http://thequint.com)

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Nation is Indebted to:

Ch Nageshu Patro

Odisha Lecturer, works as Porter to pay teachers to teach poor students



If there's someone shining the light through moonlighting, look no further than Ch Nageshu Patro of Odisha's Ganjam district. The 31-year-old is a guest lecturer at a private college by day and a porter at the railway station by night. In between, he finds time to teach poor students at a coaching centre he himself set up.

Many students travelling by train at the Berhampur railway station would recognise their teacher Ch Nageshu Patro in the garb of a porter but would certainly be baffled. For, little known to them, he lives a dual life. All for their sake. He's a lecturer by day and a porter at night, complete with a red shirt and a gamcha on his shoulders.

Nageshu Patro, resident of Ganjam district has been working as a registered porter since 2011.

His life changed after the COVID-19 outbreak. "When the pandemic struck and movement of trains got restricted, I lost my livelihood. Instead of sitting idle, I started teaching students of Class X," says Patro, 31. a postgraduate in Odia told to newspaper TOI.

Later, he set up a coaching centre for mostly poor students of Classes VIII to XII. He himself taught Hindi and Odia but had to employ teachers for other subjects. Working as a porter in night, he earns Rs 10000 to Rs 12000 per month, which he utilises for paying the salary of the four teachers, whom he has employed to teach poor, underprivileged students.

Passionate about learning and teaching, he says, "I could not appear in the high school certificate examination in 2006 as a regular candidate because my parents, who graze goats and sheep, were unable to afford money to spend on my education. I was forced to go to Surat in Gujarat in search of a job."

After working in a textile mill in Surat for about two years he returned home after he fell ill. He then went to Hyderabad to work as a salesman in a mall. While staying here he got work as a railway porter in December 2011. It is during this period that he decided to appear for the Class XII exam in 2012 through correspondence. After passing the HSC exam, he did his graduation and post-graduation from Berhampur University as a regular student, as a porter at night.

What a clarity of purpose in life against all odds, can be seen in Nageshu Patro's resolve to create opportunity for poor students to continue study.

Write to us at:

bulletin@finsindia.org

***OFFICE :4, Belle View, Lakhamsi Nappu
Road, Dadar (East), MUMBAI - 400014
Phone 022 24127274***

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