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Patna Blasts – Implications Under Assessed

21 Nov, 2013 [Ajit Doval, KC - Former Director, VIF](#) [View844](#) [Comments 0](#)

The serial blasts that took place in Patna's Gandhi Maidan on October 27, 2013 during BJP's Hunkar rally was an event whose seriousness have not been fully fathomed.

In a setting consumed by ruthless electoral rivalries, the powers that be, have failed to assess the incident in its correct perspective adequately. The event heralds a new genre of terrorist threat, where the objective was not so much to cause depredations as to prevent leaders from pursuing their lawful right of assembly and speech. The trend, if unchecked, could derail democratic process, under freedoms and seriously destabilise the country. If the terrorists even marginally improve upon their Patna performance, democracy in the body blow with no political party or political leader remaining safe enough to carry out their legitimate political activities.

Further, if the terrorists succeed in doing it to one – and their capacities are not degraded – they will do it to all; those in power become vulnerable. Long term implications would be still more dreadful and one would like to restrain oneself from alluding to them. This calls for of the event, re-assessing terrorist intentions and capabilities, evaluating efficacy of our response strategies and plugging the gaps in preparedness.

The first reality that the event brings forth is that the Indian Mujahideen (IM), though incubated by the Pakistan's ISI and a satellite of the (LeT), has amassed significant domestic content that we cannot wish away for political expediency. No responses can be strategised or executed by remaining in a denial mode. Since its inception in 2005, in last eight years, the IM has acquired menacing proportions both spread and cadre strength. Its activities and existence of local cells have been reported from the states of Delhi, UP, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Kerala, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh etc. Patna blasts when analysed along with the stunning disclosures made by Abdul Kader Bhatkal and Abu Jundal, the indigenisation of Jihadi terror in India presents a disturbing spectre. If the menace continues to grow unabated last eight years it may soon become unmanageable. The tendency of its getting intertwined with domestic politics will make things worse. Their apologists would like us to believe, their Jihad does not spring due to the lack of economic or social upliftment but their plain degrading the Indian state and establishing Sharia rule. This aim mirrors that of global Jihadist groups like the Al Qaeda and LeT. It is neither achievable nor enjoys support of Indian Muslims, but that does not reduce their capacity to destabilise the country. Attack on it is an early indication of that.

The second reality that the blasts demonstrate is that the Bihar policy of letting sleeping dogs lie does not pay. The Bihar government has policy of conflict avoidance against all extremist groups, particularly the Jihadis, hoping that the soft policy will insulate them from them. It has been an important hub of IM activities right from its inception and a good number of its front ranking activists like Tehseen Akhtar and presently driving IM's activities in India hail from the state. Proximity to Nepal made it a favoured transit route for the IM members to whom were attempted. Many IM activists considered Bihar as a safe haven and sought refuge there when under pressure from other police forces for years alone, nearly 15 IM suspects belonging to Bihar were either arrested outside Bihar or the police forces of other states nabbed them. Police often resented their forays. The political argument of Muslim sensitivity is completely unfounded as no Muslim leader of the country would want innocents to be spared.

Another reality that the blasts brings forth is the failure of the Bihar Police to anticipate and take counter measures to defeat any such threat. For a rally of this magnitude and considering high security vulnerability of the leaders attending it, they did not follow even rudimentary security. Had proper area sanitization or access control measures taken, the terrorists would not have succeeded in placing 15 IEDs. The indifferent style of policing over the years had impaired the required verve and resoluteness of the force. Bihar Police refusing to cooperate in seeking remand of Yasin Bhatkal, despite his links with the infamous Darbhanga module, is illustrative of their indifference. The state police's Advance Security Liaison (ASL) exercise with the IB and Gujarat Police before the rally and later even refusing to accept and sign it, is an action that is unpardonable. In this environment, October 27 blasts were just waiting to happen.

When the Home Minister in March this year announced a judicial probe into suicide in jail by the prime accused in the gruesome Nirbhaya case, many who preferred to see him dead than alive, grudgingly accepted it. It is, however, intriguing that in a country where inquiry commences at the drop of a hat, Patna blasts which presented an imminent and real threat to some of the top political leaders of the country and led

persons, with over 80 injured, was not considered fit enough even for a low grade magisterial inquiry. Both the central and state gov design than default, preferred to ignore it. The assertion of the Bihar Chief Minister that there was no security lapse implies that little is expected in future. Although Narendra Modi's security has been beefed up following the blasts, it is ad hoc and not co-related to a proper The bigger issue is with how much seriousness do we tackle the challenge thrown by the IM and the measures that we take to deny the and the ends. A high level judicial probe focusing on these issues will help.

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