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The Erdogan era lives on, as does the power of populism



RAMISA ROB

Turkiye's so-claimed modern Sultan, emerged victorious in the most nail-biting test to his 20-year secular Muslim nation - braces for another five years of virtual policies, and an "independent" yet disruptive foreign policy.

"Erdogan is the inventor of nativist, populist politics Turkish Research Program at the Turkiye's leader used Washington Institute. Now that he's not going anywhere, the question pressing on our minds is: what does Erdogan's win mean for global democracy - or, contradictorily, populism?

Erdogan, declaring victory from his residence in Istanbul, sang, "We have opened the door of Turkiye's century without compromising our democracy, development and our objectives." The anthem is deception at its finest. Yet, it works. His supporters, who refer to him as "Superdogan," celebrated on the streets with unbridled euphoria.

It is well-known that democracy in Turkiye - once a beacon of democratic liberalism in the East largely backslid in the last decade.

In 2013, when people took to the streets calling for Erdogan's resignation, amid a sprawling corruption scandal, the government led a brutal crackdown, imprisoning dissenters. And let's not forget the bloody 2016 failed military coup, where more than 250 people were killed and the aftermath of which saw the Erdogan government targeting 50,000 people – soldiers, police, judges, civil servants and teachers – in purge. Then, in 2017, Erdogan subsumed the role of the prime minister into that of the president through a referendum, and has since monopolised the political arena using state institutions for political gains.

Despite all the vile things he's done, Erdogan scored win after win like a wizard. A deep dive into his tenure reveals rather bloodthirsty politics, but people consume the surface he puts out: that he's all for Turkiye and the oppressed and whatnot. The majority of people forget that this man, who talks about saving people all the time, does so living in the largest presidential residence in the world: a palace with 1,100 rooms, which costs \$615 million of public money.

It cannot be denied that the 69-year-old is a clever politician. He

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, – are deafened out by the nationalist song of making Turkiye great again, flirting with the controversial history of the Ottoman era. For rule. Turkiye - once a staunchly Erdogan, and for many leaders around the world, populism is not an ideology. It's rather a robust one-man rule with creeping political strategy, wherein leaders Islamisation, unorthodox economic actively leverage common people's inclination to feel more charged by nationalist narratives and rhetoric over policies and performance.

And Erdogan has unmatched globally, and his defeat would competence in harnessing the mean something globally," said populist political strategy. Not Soner Cagaptay, director of the unfamiliar to us in Bangladesh,

> It cannot be denied that Erdogan is a clever politician. He perfected the art of autocracy where his missteps are deafened out by the nationalist song of making Turkiye great again, flirting with the controversial history of the Ottoman era. For him, and for many leaders around the world, populism is not an ideology. It's rather a robust political strategy.

development projects - which transformed physically nation - to pull the rug over systemic corruption, its effect on the economy, and alarming macroeconomic indicators. He had his supporters smitten with shiny new things: the making of the biggest airport in the world, highways, universities, schools, bridges, mosques, shopping centres, transit lines, tunnels, ports, the \$1.5 billion Kanal Istanbul in the works (which will turn Istanbul's European side into an island), and so on.

He showed off Turkiye's rising military prowess, such as the development of drones; his foreign adventures, and misadventures, legitimised Turkiye as a global force, even if a contentious one. He has alienated Turkiye from its Nato partners and imperilled the alliance's defence, most prominently by purchasing Russian S-400 missile defence systems. Those bold moves have been welcomed by his supporters. A 40-year-old perfected the art of autocracy where owner of a stagnating barbershop his missteps – such as lowering in Istanbul told Foreign Policy, "This interest rates to bring down inflation is the future I want to give my sons: is left of it.

A country standing strong and independently on the world stage. A safe place."

re-election campaign withstood troubling times for the Turkish economy: rampant inflation, a deepening cost-ofliving crunch, and intensifying poverty. Turkiye's response to the earthquake, which killed 50,000 lives, also highlighted the negligence of the government and was perceived by pollsters to reflect the last straw on the proverbial camel's back.

Yet, the majority of Turkish people, in a polarised nation. saw no better option than their strongman. The Table of Six and the uncharismatic Kemal Kılıcdaroğlu was never going to stand, because Erdogan's hold over the nation - in the judiciary, the media narrative, and so on - makes it difficult to launch an effective opposition. It's also another indicator of his dexterous autocratic strategies, and the same dynamic is seen elsewhere in the world.

Erdogan's win is a learning lesson for us to shift our thinking. It disparages the notion long held by analysts and journalists: that freedom of speech, rule of law, and a flourishing economy are essential to win the hearts of the people. It's common to think that when those features are threatened, especially the economy, the people's will turns away from the office-holder. We perceive they want to break free from the shackles of the leaders responsible for the damage. But in this unstable global climate, that purview, though logical, is rather black and white.

Politicians like Erdogan - in Russia, India, China, Israel, and the far-right parts of the West are mangling history to capitalise on their self-interests, and people support them. (For example, Putin's support has not faltered even after the Ukraine war that's hit the Russian economy, as people still long for that past glory that shattered from the break-up of the Soviet Union.) Erdogan has ever-sosuccessfully played to the historical prestige of Turkiye to cultivate popularity; his nationalist narrative, which often includes bashing the Western global hegemony, nurtures national nostalgia of Turkiye's early global dominance.

Post his election win, calls are being made in the Western media for Erdogan to pivot his policies. But "when autocrats face an unstable domestic context, they double down on repression," says Gonul Tol, the author of *Erdogan* War: A Strongman's Struggle at Home and in Syria. Erdogan has long held a self-conscious neo-Ottomanism dream, posing himself to be a modern version of Sultan Selim, who expanded the Turkish empire from a strong regional power to a gargantuan empire with an exclusionary vision of power. It is unrealistic to think he'd shift. If anything, he'll be more desperate to bring that dream to life, the act of which will continue to shake the edifice of democracy and whatever

Big poultry caging small farmers



LOOK

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poultry farmers Bangladesh are finding themselves stranded in murky waters as big players are flexing their muscle and might to shape the poultry industry, and line their pockets further. Concerns have been raised on the hegemony of big poultry farms by the Bangladesh Poultry Association (BPA), according to whom only about 60,000 to 65,000 of the 160,000 marginal poultry farmers in the country are still in business. The rest – unable to fight the big players' manipulations were forced to pull the plug on their businesses.

It has been reported that the big players - around 12 of them dominate the industry and manipulate the prices of chicks and poultry feed to rake in higher profits. Let's consider the prices of poultry feed, for instance. Firms that are engaged in contract farming with the big players, get to purchase 50kg sacks of poultry feed for Tk 2,500. The same is sold to marginalised/independent small poultry farmers at Tk 3,300. This is to coerce the independent, marginalised farmers into entering contract farming agreements with the large farms.

However, even for those who are in the contract farming business, there is no guarantee that their business will remain unscathed. Mahmudur Rahman Akash, a poultry farmer from Jhenaidah, is currently entangled in a Tk 50 lakh lawsuit filed by a large company. About eight months back, Akash entered into a farming contract with the company, and got 2,500 chicks to rear. He also provided a signed blank cheque to the company as guarantee when signing the contract. However, 500 of the chicks died due to disease and the company failed to deliver the much-needed medicine to Akash on time. When Akash refused to continue farming for the company, they filed a lawsuit

Now the question is: did the contract – in all probability drafted by the well-paid, well equipped legal team of the big company –

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in which either of the parties could terminate an agreement by serving a 30- or 60-day notice? Why should a hapless farmer - whom the company failed to provide essential support on time - be harassed by a Tk 50 lakh lawsuit?

According to a report by this daily, around 10,000 farmers and dealers, mostly from Bogura, Joypurhat, and Jhenaidah, are facing cases related to blank cheques which are provided to big companies as guarantees. While providing bank guarantees is a standard practice in many businesses, this tool should not be used to harass and bully marginalised businesses.

Also, the farmers engaged in contract farming are paid very little by the big companies as profit. When farmers raise concerns about the selling price of poultry before signing a contract, exchange rate volatility, Ukraine-Russia-warinduced economic slowdown, cost of packaging, VAT, etc are cited as reasons for paying them the bare minimum. Unfortunately, due to a lack of supervision of this ecosystem by the government read: the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) – there is no one to question the big companies when determining the selling price of poultry. How is the selling price of poultry even determined? Does the selling price remain volatile depending on the market? This should not be the case as it creates a new loop of exploitation of

farmers by the big companies. Moreover, the free rein of these companies to manipulate the market through price syndication also creates additional pressure on consumers, who have to pay a premium to buy poultry protein. Between January and March this year, poultry prices kept spiralling, going beyond the purchasing capacity of the common people, with broiler chickens being sold at a whopping Tk 280 per kg in the kitchen markets.

Eventually, the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection had to intervene and not contain a basic termination to bring down the prices in the create a level playing field for all in or severance clause, under wholesale market. The readiness

A CLOSER with which these companies agreed to bring down the prices by Tk 30-40 per kg indicates that they have been making a profit much higher than this. Businesses would never take a loss just to serve the

Interestingly, citing this same timeframe, Bangladesh Poultry Association alleged that big poultry farms made an extra profit of Tk 936 crore through syndication. According to them, the big players made a 40 percent margin, selling poultry at Tk 230-240 per kg, while the production cost was only around Tk 130-140

While transformation in the poultry sector is a welcome move, small, independent, marginalised farmers and those involved in contract farming with big companies need legal resources and logistics-related protection from authorities and policymakers. The National Poultry Development Policy, 2008 (NPDP) stipulates that proper technical assistance should be provided to marginal and poor farmers so that they can earn through poultry farming. The NPDP has entrusted the DLS with the responsibility to monitor poultry markets, remove discrepancies and anomalies, curb the influence of dealers, and protect marginalised farmers. Unfortunately, the DLS seems to have failed in all of these responsibilities, and the number of poultry farmers plummets while poultry prices skyrocket in the markets.

In the outgoing budget, the government cut down tariffs on the import of poultry feed. Despite that, imported feed is becoming expensive. As such, the government should subsidise it and reduce the import duty further to support the industry.

Poultry farming has immense potential in Bangladesh, given that around 90 percent of rural Bangladeshi households keep poultry. But challenges remain in fully leveraging this opportunity and enabling small households to become self-sufficient small farmers. The decreasing number of poultry farms raise fears that there might be a shortfall in the supply of poultry in the market, pushing the prices up further. The price hike of eggs has already been attributed to the closing down of farms.

It is high time for the government to take a closer look at the malpractices that are forcing farmers out of the poultry business, sit with the four major producers and take immediate measures to the industry.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Local Government Engineering Department Office of The Upazila Engineer Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali. www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Dated: 30.05.2023

e-Tender Notice No. 07/2022-2023

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement as bellow.

SL No	Tender ID	Package No	Name of Work	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing and Opening Date & Time
01	840705	Union/Ptk/Sada/lowk/01	Repair of Lowkathi Union Parishad Bhaban, Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali.	11-Jun-2023 12:00	11-Jun-2023 16:00
02	840706	Union/Ptk/Sada/Mouk/02	Repair Work of Moukaron Union Parishad Bhaban, Under Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali.	11-Jun-2023 12:00	11-Jun-2023 16:00
03	840707	Union/Ptk/Sada/Mori/03	Repair of Morichbunia U.P Bhaban, Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali.	11-Jun-2023 12:00	11-Jun-2023 16:00
04	840708	Union/Ptk/Sada/Jain/04	Repair of Jainkathi Union Parishad Bhaban, Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali.	11-Jun-2023 12:00	11-Jun-2023 16:00
05	840709	Union/Ptk/Sada/Itba/05	Repair of Itbaria Union Parishad Bhaban, Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali.	11-Jun-2023 12:00	11-Jun-2023 16:00
06	840710	Union/Ptk/Sada/Auli/06	Repair of Auliapur Union Parishad Bhaban,Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali.	11-Jun-2023 12:00	11-Jun-2023 16:00
07	840711	Union/Ptk/Sada/Loha/07	Repair of Lohalia Union Parishad Bhaban, Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali.	11-Jun-2023 12:00	11-Jun-2023 16:00

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