

Institute of Chinese Studies

PANEL DISCUSSION

*The Third Plenum and
After: Understanding the
Economic, Political and
Ideological Messaging for
China and the World*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Speaker:

**G. Venkat Raman
Aravind Yelery
Swayamsiddha Samal**

21 August 2024

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Speakers: **Dr. Aravind Yelery**, Associate Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Visiting Faculty, Fudan School of Management, Shanghai; and, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Prof. G. Venkat Raman, Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Indore; and Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Ms. Swayamsiddha Samal, Doctoral Scholar, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Discussant: **Dr. Bhim Subba**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad; and, Adjunct Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Chair: **Dr. Anand P. Krishnan**, Fellow, Centre of Excellence for Himalayan Studies, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, Delhi-NCR; and, Adjunct Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Venue: Zoom Webinar

- The panel discussion analysed the July 2024 Third Plenum of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), focusing on its economic, political, and ideological implications. The panel explored both the contents of the communique and the broader context of the delay.
- The Chair, Dr. Anand P. Krishnan, highlighted the document's emphasis on reform, particularly through the recurrent use of the term "new", noting its legalistic framing and the CPC's attempt to project forward-looking governance.
- Dr. Aravind Yelery linked the delay in the Plenum to internal indecision regarding ministerial portfolios. He noted the vague nature of the reforms proposed, with several major areas — such as tax, property rights, and regional inequality — left unaddressed in terms of concrete implementation mechanisms.

- Prof. G. Venkat Raman examined the document through a strategic lens, highlighting its twin objectives of nation-building and economic stabilisation. He discussed technological development as a major focus area, referencing “new quality productive forces” and “new national system”, while also cautioning that challenges including labour costs and centralisation remain.
- Ms. Swayamsiddha Samal examined the dynamics of elite politics within the CPC, with special focus on Article 42 and leadership reshuffling. She highlighted the peculiar treatment of dismissed officials and pointed to subtle shifts in party politics, including increased female representation.
- Dr. Bhim Subba framed the Plenum as a mid-term report on Xi Jinping’s leadership underscoring its resemblance to the Plenum of the 18th Party Congress. However, he also cautioned that leadership urgency and reform fatigue may hinder implementation of over 300 reforms by 2029.
- The discussion concluded with the consensus that while the Plenum signalled continuity in reform discourse, it lacked clarity in execution and raised critical questions about governance, elite politics, and long-term economic policy.

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