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Hu Jintao is keen to have the proceedings against Bo Xilai, the party boss of the southwestern metropolis of Chongqing, completed before handing over as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to his expected successor Xi Jinping.

2. The transition to Xi is to take place at the 18th Congress of the CPC. Originally, the expectations were that the 18th Congress would be held on October 18, 2012, at which Hu will hand over to Xi the leadership of the Party and a new Politburo and its Standing Committee would take over.

3. But till September 27, there was no announcement of the exact date of the Congress. This gave rise to speculation that the delay was due to divergence of opinion among senior leaders of the party as to whether the disciplinary and criminal proceedings against Bo should be supervised by the present Politburo and its Standing Committee headed by Hu or by the new Politburo and its Standing Committee that will be headed by Xi with Hu having no more control over the proceedings.

4. This speculation was ended on September 28, 2012, with a twin announcement regarding the completion of the Party disciplinary proceedings against Bo under Hu's supervision and the proposed convening of the 18th Party Congress on November 8 instead of on October 18 as originally expected.

5. It was announced by the official Xinhua news agency that Bo, who had been a member of the powerful Politburo, was stripped of his party membership and other positions held by him. It said:

"Bo Xilai's behaviour created serious negative consequences, seriously damaged the party and the country's reputation in China and abroad, created an extremely negative result, and created huge losses for the party and the Chinese people. Bo made serious errors and he bears the major responsibility for the scandal that saw Gu Kailai (his wife) convicted of murdering British businessman Neil Heywood after a multi-million-dollar deal went sour. Bo seriously violated party discipline and abused his power with regard to the Gu Kailai and Wang Lijun (his police chief) cases, made serious errors, for which he bears the major responsibility, abused his public position to aid others and, directly and through family members, received huge bribes from others. Gu Kailai used Bo Xilai's public position to win favours for others, including family members. Bo's family members received huge financial benefits from others, and Bo had inappropriate sexual relationships with several women."

6. The completion of the disciplinary proceedings against him in the party and his removal from all the positions held by him in the party set the stage for his criminal trial. The decision to hold the 18th Party Congress from November 8 to formalise the transition of the party leadership from Hu to Xi would enable the existing party leadership headed by Hu to have the criminal trial completed and judgement pronounced before Hu hands over to Xi.

7. While this would be procedurally correct, the completion of all the proceedings under Hu's leadership would also ensure that the new party leadership that would take over on November 8 would not show any leniency to Bo.

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