

## Scenario 148

### KARACHI AFFAIRS IN YEAR 2013

See how year 2013 was welcome in Karachi.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013; soon after the MQM rally addressed by Dr Tahirul Qadri at the Jinnah Ground, a bomb blast ripped through the nearby Ayesha Manzil area killing four people and injuring at least 45 others.

The incident took place just three days after a blast near Karachi Cantt railway station. The bomb blast occurred near the Aga Khan Maternity Hospital in Azizabad police station limits, mainly injuring bus passengers.

The police held that explosives were strapped on a motorcycle which had been parked in between the buses. The buses were stationed there to take people back home from a public meeting of the MQM; a massive rally of the MQM and Dr Qadri had just concluded. All the deceased were activists of the MQM and lived in Orangi Town. Due to the blast, some buses and other vehicles were also damaged.

The shockwave of the explosion was felt many kilometers away from spot of the sabotage activity. Windowpanes of several buildings in adjoining areas were shattered due to impact of the bomb blast. The bomb weighted around three kgs and was locally made with ball bearings, attached with a remote controlled device.

The police said the same techniques were used by the banned *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* [LeJ] and Jundullah in their earlier attacks that occurred in Karachi in the month of Muharram 2012 - *Jundullah* had an expertise in making Improvised Explosive Devices [IED] which directly connects with a mobile SIM.

Separately but on the same day, at least eight people including an ASI, a man and his son, were killed in different incidents of firing in metropolis.

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- 51-years-old ASI of Anti Violent Crime Cell [AVCC], Faiz Ahmed, was gunned down by unidentified armed men near Habib Bank Roundabout, in the limit of SITE-A Police Station.
- 28-years old Imran Baloch was gunned down by the unknown attackers in old Golimar area in the remit of Pak Colony Police Station.
- Razzaq Baloch 55, was killed in firing of unidentified armed men near Salaman Heights, Golimar Roundabout in the limits of Gulbahar Police Station.
- Riaz Ahmed, security guard of a private company, was gunned down by unidentified armed men near Lasaniya Restaurant, Rashid Mehnas Road, in the jurisdiction of Shahrah e Faisal Police Station.
- A four-day old beheaded body of a man, aged around 45 years, was recovered from Sher Shah Area in the limits Sher Shah Police Station. The identity of victim could not be ascertained.
- Another body of a man, whose identity could not be ascertained, was found from Mewashah graveyard, Lyari Town area, in the limit of Pak Colony Police Station.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2013; Haider and Jamal, twin brothers, were going to the university when unknown gunmen attacked them; both twin brothers suffered gunshot wounds but one died at the spot and the other died in a private hospital next night. The 20-year-old BCom student and his brother were attacked by two motorcyclists at the intersection of Mirza Adam Khan Road in Agra Taj Colony.

On 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013; a private school owner was shot dead in North Karachi in what police described as a 'sectarian' attack. Engineer Syed Ali Hyder Jafri, a 48-year-old Shiite Muslim, was shot dead in Sector 11-A, North Karachi, after he dropped his wife to a campus of their school.

On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013; at least six people including three policemen were killed and seven injured after twin blasts in Karachi.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013; at least 3 people were killed and 4 injured in a blast outside a commercial plaza in Karachi at night.

On 7<sup>th</sup> February 2013; a policeman was killed and five other were wounded in a bomb attack targeting a police van in Karachi's Orangi Town.

On 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013; at least six persons including an Assistant Sub Inspector were killed in various target killings in Karachi.

On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2013; eight people were killed in target killings in Karachi, it was Sunday – a picnic day for criminals.

ABBAS TOWN KARACHI EPISODE:

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013; a huge car bomb blast in a mainly Shiite Muslim area of Karachi killed at least 45 people and left 150 injured; the death toll went up later because the condition of half of the injured persons was severely critical. The explosion blew the front off two five-storey apartment blocks in the Abbas Town setting one on fire and trapping people beneath piles of rubble.

Hundreds of shops and houses were badly damaged in the blast, which came as worshippers were leaving nearby mosques, and the balconies of the apartment blocks were destroyed.

Then Karachi was plagued by sectarian, ethnic and political violence, with more than 2,200 people killed in shootings and bombings during the year 2012 [about 400 were *Shiite* amongst them], but bomb blasts on this scale was rare. Pakistan's parliament was due to dissolve in two weeks in preparation for next general elections, but rising violence all around especially against Shiites making up about 20% of the 180 million population, raised serious questions about security.

More than 400 Shiites were killed in sectarian attacks in 2012, according to Human Rights Watch, and two deadly bombings targeting the minority in the south-western city of Quetta have already killed nearly 200 that year. Two weeks before, those *Shiite Hazaras* were killed in target bombing in Quetta, capital of Baluchistan province - which was a focus of sectarian violence then. Both attacks were claimed by the banned extremist Sunni group *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ].

On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013; certain gunmen brought life to a standstill in Karachi and other urban centres in Sindh, as the MQM had called for a 'peaceful protest' to denounce the government's inaction over the arrest of the Abbas Town attackers.

*Suo Motu on Abbas Town Killings:* The Supreme Court of Pakistan [SC] had announced a *suo motu* action on Abbas Town episode immediately after the news appeared in the press and electronic media; it called the

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concerned administrative departments to come up with their reports and strategies.

On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013 Justice Jawwad S Khawaja, while hearing the said *suo motu* case, commented that the Sindh government had completely failed. The SC 5-member bench comprised of Justice Khawaja, Justice Khilji Arif Hussain, Justice Amir Hani Muslim and Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan under the supervision of CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry.

In earlier hearings, Sindh Chief Minister S Qaim Ali Shah 'surrendered' the Sindh Inspector General of Police, Fayyaz Leghari, and Deputy Inspector General of Police East, Aleem Jafri, over the Abbas Town bomb blast. The judges ordered the CM Sindh to suspend three more officers, SSP Malir Rao Anwar Ahmed, DSP Sohrab Goth Qamar Ahmed and PS Sachal's SHO Azhar Iqbal, for their 'criminal negligence and poor response' after the blast.

While the CJP-led SC bench was hearing *suo motu* cases related to the Abbas Town blast and lawlessness in Karachi those days, several incidents in the city illustrated the complexity of the metropolis's violence.

Hence the Supreme Court was absolutely right in its criticism of the police and district administration; both had failed to control crime and terrorism in the city. Even the Rangers were proved ineffective despite being given wide-ranging powers. The chief justice's observation that Karachi's lawlessness was mainly due to a turf war between vested interests, seemed correct; the metropolis was facing more complex issues.

True, organised crime played a major role in Karachi's violence, but there were other, equally powerful faulty lines tearing the city apart: Karachi was plagued by sectarian, ethnic and political violence, with the lines often blurring. In such a scenario, could administrative and judicial orders alone bring peace? Increasing the number of anti-terrorism courts in Karachi and recruiting more policemen could not help because the courts could not prosecute criminals while the police took biased actions against suspects because of their political links.

Political parties often applied pressure to have suspects released because they had links with them. The real need was of depoliticising the police and to end the political meddling in law enforcement. While the SC bench was in Karachi for hearing *suo motu* case related to the Abbas Town blast on 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> March, several incidents in the city illustrated the complexity of the metropolis's violence.

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On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013; the Rangers had to conduct a "targeted operation" in Lyari after two of their personnel in uniform were kidnapped and later found dead in a local graveyard.

On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013; a bank was robbed in Defence, making it the fifth bank heist that year. Hence the Supreme Court was absolutely right in its criticism of the police and Rangers; both had failed to control crime and terrorism in the city.

The police had gone more corrupt and politicised while the Rangers made itself ineffective due to frequent interference of the local PPP leadership. In such atmosphere, CJP Chaudhry's observation that '*Karachi's lawlessness is mainly due to a turf war between vested interests*' got fire and became debatable. As the events had shown, the metropolis was being termed and reputed as city of complex problems.

Another situation cropped up when the Sindh Assembly in session decided to discuss the conduct of the judges and judiciary while the hot debate on Abbas Town episode was on cards. On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013; an application seeking contempt of court proceeding against Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah was filed in the Supreme Court at Karachi.

Applicant Syed Mehmood Akhtar Naqvi submitted that conduct of superior judiciary could not be debated in the assembly, adding that the CM Sindh said during the Assembly session that *the court was predetermined in passing the judgment in Abbas Town suo moto case* as he was not heard by the bench. The applicant prayed the court to initiate contempt of court proceedings and treason under article 6 of the Constitution and declared him disqualified from taking charge of any government office.

On 29<sup>th</sup> March 2013; Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry directed police and Rangers to eliminate no-go areas by exhausting all the resources available in Karachi by the time the apex court resume hearing of Karachi unrest case in the city on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

The orders came as five-member special bench of the apex court headed by the CJ took up the case regarding no-go areas in Karachi.

The bench came down heavily on police officers saying that why police were unable to locate the areas when media could obtain credible information in this regard. DIG West Zone Karachi Zafar Bukhari and SSP East Zone Amir Farooqui appeared before the bench and claimed that the situation was improving in Karachi. Police officers claimed that '*there were no no-go areas in the city instead criminals were holed up in some*

*pockets of the metropolis where operations were being conducted'.*

Justice Khilji Arif Hussain inquired whether people could independently move in *Shanti Nagar* area of Karachi while a Naval base was also located as no-go zone. During an anti-polio campaign in Shanti Nagar, it was identified as a no-go area by a newspaper. The apex court was told that a slum area was located under the hills in *Mangopir* where the Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan [TTP] had presence of about 200 militants. The officers also told that in the past they had been working under political influence.

During PPP's regime of 2008-13, the MQM became a part of the ruling alliance in the centre and Sindh province; its leaders Dr Farooq Sattar and Babar Khan Ghouri were inducted in the federal cabinet with two very significant portfolios.

On 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013; Altaf Hussain came under fire for his televised speech across Pakistan where he allegedly demanded the separation of Karachi from the rest of Pakistan if the public mandate of his party was not acceptable to the 'establishment.'

Over that speech, the London Metropolitan police was flooded with complaints by hundreds of British and Pakistani citizens against MQM chief Altaf Hussain. Adam Thomson, the British High Commissioner in Islamabad told newsmen:

*"We are well aware of Altaf Hussain's remarks immediately after the election. We received quite a number of representations on them; it is up to the [British] police to say what they will do next.*

*.... that the London police is independent to investigate the complaints and is under no pressure from the UK government."*

Hussain, however, clarified saying that his speech was taken out of context.

Like so many other *suo moto* notices, Supreme Court's this action regarding Abbas Town massacre also fizzled away with the time.

**ZAHRA SHAHID OF PTI MURDERED:**

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013; Pakistan *Tehrik-i-Insaaf* [PTI]'s activist, Zahra Shahid Hussain, was killed late night in an attempted robbery incident on the eve of partial re-polls in Karachi's NA-250 constituency. Three motorcycle riders tried to steal Hussain's handbag and opened fire upon resistance by the PTI leader outside her residence in the city's Defence Housing Phase-IV.

The incident appeared to be a purse-snatching attempt that went wrong. The PTI held that the incident was an act of terror and a mark of failure on part of the provincial government. Imran Khan urged the PPP government to take action against MQM Altaf Hussain for issuing threatening and provocative statements to incite violence in the country. Altaf Hussain himself condemned the killing of Zahra Shahid but the PTI Chief held Altaf Hussain directly responsible for the killing as he [Altaf] had openly threatened PTI activists and leaders through public broadcasts.

Zahra Shahid Hussain was the former president of PTI's Sindh Women's wing and one of the founding members of the party. In another tweet, Khan also held the British government responsible for the 'murder' of Zahra Shahid saying he had warned them about British citizen [Altaf Hussain] after his open threats to PTI workers' lives.

Zahra Shahid had received two bullet wounds on her head. She had been with the PTI for the past 16 years. The MQM Rabita Committee's leader Wasay Jalil said Imran Khan had wrongly alleged the MQM chief and in haste. Altaf Hussain said the party would take legal action against Khan's conspiracy to politically polarise Karachi.

During the same days, the London Metropolitan police had launched an investigation against the MQM chief following complaints by hundreds of British and Pakistani citizens over the aforesaid televised speech - in which Altaf Hussain said:

*".....it would be best to separate Karachi from the rest of Pakistan if the public mandate of his party was not acceptable to the establishment."*

In the said speech, the MQM Chief had used threatening language saying his party workers would teach protesters at *Teen Talwar* a lesson if he ordered them to do so. He also threatened to harm those who were hatching conspiracies against MQM. Moreover, he had directed party activists to mentally prepare themselves for his next call – saying that:

*"I am about to set free my enraged followers if opposition against our party is not stopped"*

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Farooq Sattar, the most senior MQM leader in Pakistan, appeared to accept that Altaf Hussain had gone too far with his speech from London, saying the MQM leader had retracted his remarks and offered an apology.

The MQM, with its solid block of seats in parliament, had been a share holder of state-power, regardless of which party headed the government. Since 1999, the MQM had enjoyed enormous influence by being a key coalition partner of the government led by the Gen Musharraf, PML[Q] and PPP, last trounced in elections of 11<sup>th</sup> May 2013. But Nawaz Sharif, the leader of the PML[N], had won enough seats in the election to ignore the MQM.

The prospect of the MQM having much-reduced political influence in Islamabad raised fears it could once again resort to violence and intimidation that party officials claimed they had been trying to put behind them. Farooq Sattar accused Imran Khan of further inflaming a city already vulnerable to violent confrontations between the ethnic groups living in the city. Sattar held that:

*"The killing of Zahra Shahid Hussain was a conspiracy by someone who wants to take advantage, to bring Karachi to another test in terms of sectarian and political polarisation.*

*Khan should wait for the results of a police investigation, he said, adding that the MQM would launch a defamation action against the former cricket star."*

J MAQBOOL BAQAR ATTACKED:

On 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013; un-identified bombers targeted a senior judge in Karachi, killing at least seven people on a busy street during morning rush hours. The attack happened as Maqbool Baqir Rizvi, a senior judge at the Sindh High Court, drove past on the Burns Road on his way to the high court. *Seven people were killed; one officer from the Rangers paramilitary force was among the dead.* Rangers and police had made up Justice Baqir's security contingent.

Justice Baqir was rushed to hospital with critical injuries and that his driver was killed. Nine people were injured. The bomb was planted on a motor-bike and it was detonated by remote control when the cars were moving slowly. The bomb also damaged a motorcycle and a police mobile van.



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Justice Baqir had a reputation for honesty and had also served as a judge in special anti-terrorism courts set up in Pakistan to hand down quick judgments in terror cases. *Tehreek e Taliban* Pakistan [TTP] claimed responsibility for the attack, its spokesman Ihsanullah Ihsan told the *Newsweek* while claiming:

*“Justice Baqir was acting in an un-Islamic manner. The Sindh High Court judge was on our target list since long. His decisions were anti-sharia, and he was ruling against the mujahideen.”*

The fact remained that the judge was attacked being from the Shiite minority as was the widespread wave of Shia killings those days.

The targeting of J Maqbool Baqar in Karachi was a clear message from religious militants that even a high court judge with a significant security detail was within their reach. The incident was probably the first of its kind where such a high-ranking jurist was targeted. While the fact that the Sindh High Court judge survived the attack was nothing short of a miracle, a number of people — mostly policemen and Rangers in his entourage — died in the bomb attack that left no doubt of its intensity.

Surely, the judge was believed to be on *Lashkar-i-Jhangvi* [LeJ]'s hit list while a TTP suspect arrested in Karachi last year told police that Maqbool Baqar was among his intended targets. The jurist had served as the administrative judge of the Anti-Terrorism Courts in Karachi and initially heard terrorism cases in this capacity.

When a judge of the seniority and stature of Justice Baqar could so easily be targeted, how judges from lower courts could move actively on cases to convict terrorism suspects? In the aftermath of the attack, some lower court judges refused to hear terrorism cases. The intimidation and threats those judges used to face played a major part in shooting up of the terrorist crimes and lowering the conviction rates.

High reforms were needed where the security of individuals associated with anti-terrorism cases were concerned, the larger issue was that of addressing the menace of sectarian and *jihadi* militancy in Karachi. The fact remained that the *jihadi* infrastructure was not being dismantled by the security and intelligence apparatus; that was why the judges, lawmakers, government officials, security personnel and common citizens continued to suffer being the 'soft' targets for militants.

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On 17<sup>th</sup> July 2013; Karachi Police arrested the mastermind behind that deadly bombing which killed nine people and had severely injured J Maqbool Baqar. In an operation carried out in Surjani Town area, police arrested Bashir Leghari, suspected of being the mastermind of the attack on the judge's convoy, along with two of his accomplices; the operation was carried out with the help of an intelligence agency.

Leghari was injured in the exchange of fire during the operation, while a policeman was also wounded. The suspect belonged to the '*Asif chotu group*' of the *Lashkar-i-Jhangvi* [LeJ], a banned militant outfit involved in several sectarian killings. The encounter lasted half an hour while the police was not expecting such stiff resistance.

The wounded suspect was admitted to a hospital for treatment but died late next night. A Kalashnikov, a 9mm pistol and explosive material were seized from him.

However, the family disputed the police version as usually a practice in Pakistan where the murder gangster of 100 killings when himself killed in police encounter, his family members come out on roads saying that their 'son' is killed by police in 'fake' encounter – in an illegal way; he should have been taken through due process.

Meanwhile, the *Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat* [ASWJ] spokesman Maulana Akbar Saeed Farooqi said in a press statement that "*Hafiz Bashir Leghari has nothing to do with the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi or any other militant group as he also remained in touch with the local administration and with religious scholars of all parties.*"

As per ASWJ's stance, contingents of police entered Leghari's home, injured him and also detained his son Muavia Leghari and guest Qari Amin. Maulana Farooqi had urged the chief justice of Pakistan to take *suo motu* notice of the incident.....*Allah Hi Janey Kon Bashar Hai* [Only God knows the actual facts].

**MQM's MOVE TO GET ISI BANNED:**

On 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013; the whole Pakistani media, press and electronic, orchestrated the British government's record which had confirmed that the MQM leader Altaf Hussain had written to the then British Prime Minister

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Tony Blair in September 2001, calling for the abolition of the Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI], Pakistan's premier spy agency.

The said letter was dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2001, signed by Altaf Hussain in person and was delivered to 10 Downing Street by one Nirj Deva, who later became a Member of the European Parliament [MEP] for the Southeast of England. The British government was assured of MQM's support in countering terrorism in Pakistan in return for help in achieving *"equitable participation in governing the province of Sindh and in disbanding the ISI"*. The urge, appeal and offers made in the letter was that:

*".... the ISI [Pakistan] secret agency must be disbanded otherwise the ISI will continue to produce many Osama-bin-Ladens and Talibans in future.*

*.....many demonstrations in Karachi in favour of the international community combating terrorism within five days notice after this agreement is signed, putting hundreds of thousands of people on the streets of Karachi.*

*.....unlimited resources throughout the towns and villages in the province of Sindh and the province of Punjab to some extent, to monitor the activities of fundamentalists and Taliban-led organisations.*

*Also..... to monitor the activities of Madrasas (religious schools).*

*Also.....to ensure select groups to penetrate Afghanistan in the form of aid workers so as to enhance the Western agencies intelligence information capabilities."*

In return for these services, the alleged letter asked for:

*"equitable participation in the governance of the province of Sindh and the Federation as partners; genuine, equitable participation in all spheres of life including education, employment, army and administration; local policing consisting of Muhajirs and Sindhis".*

Britain's Foreign Office had confirmed "the Prime Minister's Office received a letter from Mr Altaf Hussain which was passed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office [FCO] for a response," the Cabinet Office had told adding that: *"No information is held indicating that a response was sent to Mr Hussain"*.

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The FCO confirmed further that *"On 27 September 2001, the FCO received correspondence, via No. 10, from Mr Nirj Deva MEP enclosing a copy of the letter from Mr Hussain. Mr Ben Bradshaw MP, the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the FCO, replied to Mr Deva's letter."*

The media was able to procure a copy of FCO's reply to Mr Nirj Deva MEP from *Ben Bradshaw MP, UK's Foreign Office Minister* which stated:

*"Thank you for your letter of 23 September to the Prime Minister, enclosing correspondence from Mr Altaf Hussain, leader of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM).*

*....we welcome Mr Hussain's condemnation of all forms of terrorism, his desire to assist the international community and support for democracy. Terrorists operate without regard for borders, so the fight against terrorism needs to be global and concerted one".*

With the passage of time, it went clear that the UK did not take up the offer of help from the MQM leader and preferred to deal with the then head of the state. FCO's minister had said that:

*"I applaud President Musharraf's courageous decision to support the international coalition and welcome his proposals to restore democratic government in Pakistan.*

*I hope that he and the people of Pakistan can count on the MQM and other political parties to play a constructive role in securing Pakistan's future."*

Nirj Deva MEP [real name: Niranjan Joseph De Silva Deva-Aditya - born in Sri Lanka] later confirmed that he had passed on letter from the MQM to 10 Downing Street but said he was not aware of the contents of the letter and did not agree with the demands made within it. Mr Deva held:

*"I was asked by the MQM to pass on this letter to Tony Blair. I don't take sides but if my constituents ask me to pass their letters to government departments then I will not say no. It is a standard practice for me and I have to listen to my constituents."*

Nirj Deva also told daily *'The News'* correspondent that he knew Muhammad Anwar since 1992, and Dr Imran Farooq from 2000 onwards; he said:

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*"I was introduced to Dr Farooq by Muhammad Anwar. On the face of it the letter, though unsubtle, is offering help to the Coalition. Other than the idiotic clause about the ISI, the other 'conditions' appear to be pro-West and pro-democracy at a time when I suppose Pakistan was under military rule.*

*Whether [Altaf] Hussain could have delivered cannot be measured other than by the experts in the FCO. No doubt they thought this was a lot of hot air, hence their bland reply to me."*

In August 2011, a war of words broke out between the former Sindh home minister Dr Zulfikar Mirza and the MQM; details have already been given in an earlier chapter. Dr Mirza alleged that the letter was written by the MQM but the MQM strongly denied having anything to do with it.

On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2011, Ansar Abbasi wrote in his newspaper that "...one of the country's leading spymasters [ISI] as confirming that the alleged letter was written by the MQM leader. This assertion was robustly denied on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2011 by Mustafa Kamal, then MQM's leading figure, who held a press conference in Karachi and termed the letter "baseless", akin to a "media trial" of the party.

On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013, an MPA of MQM, Nadeem Hashmi was arrested owing to firing at a police mobile in the Haideri area of the city in which two policemen were killed.

Najam Sethi, in his 'the Friday Times' dated 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 traced out the behavioural patterns of the MQM towards successive military establishments from its origin:

*"The MQM's relationship with the military establishment had many ups and downs since its formation in 1984 at the behest of Gen Ziaul Haq in order to combat PPP-Sindhi nationalism following the MRD movement. It conspired with the military establishment led by Gen Aslam Beg and Gen Hameed Gul to oust the government of Benazir Bhutto in 1990.*

*When it [MQM] tried to flex its muscles during the government of Nawaz Sharif after the exit of both Generals Gul and Beg, it was ruthlessly put down by the then Karachi corps commander, Gen Asif Nawaz Janjua, and Altaf fled to self-imposed exile in London.*

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*After B Bhutto returned to power in 1993, she sent the Rangers under Gen Naseerullah Babar into Karachi to "sort out" the MQM. But the MQM returned to power with the advent of Gen Pervez Musharraf in 1999 because he was in desperate need of political allies after scuttling both Bhutto and Sharif in 2008-13.*

*Subsequently, the MQM was in and out of government, constantly holding Karachi to hostage and exacting a terrible price for its displeasure at the Zardari regime for not showering it with ministries and funds.*

*The arrival of Nawaz Sharif has, however, unleashed new anti-MQM dialectic not dissimilar to the one in 1990: the Sharif government didn't need to pander to MQM because it no longer needed its electoral support to govern in Islamabad or Lahore while the stability.*

*Security of Karachi was critical to Sharif's economic development agenda — hence he used Rangers to "clean-up" Karachi all over again. Matters got worsened for the MQM with the new challenge from Imran Khan for the heart and minds of Karachi's youth bulge as evidenced by the huge turnout in his latest jalsa in 2014."*

Much later, during whole 2014, the developments in investigation of Dr Imran Farooq's murder disturbed Altaf Hussain the most. The British police were very keen to lay their hands on two MQM activists who were picked up by the ISI two years ago after they fled from London to Karachi via Sri Lanka following the murder of Dr Farooq.

Had they been deported to the UK and confessed to their links with Altaf Hussain, it was feared it might extend huge blow to the MQM leader. That made Hussain acutely sensitive to what the Pakistani military establishment thought about him and the MQM. He started blowing hot and cold against the military, once supporting democracy and next moment calling for martial law to "save the country"; once welcoming the appointment of Gen Rizwan Akhtar as the new DG ISI but then asking why Gen Akhtar was fixated on "targeting the MQM" when he was DG Sindh Rangers.

Suddenly going harsh, Altaf Hussain publicly addressed 14 critical questions to the military establishment showing his resentment towards the Rangers-led Operation Clean-up in Karachi allegedly concentrated on MQM activists more than on any other party's supporters.

A moment of acute crisis for the MQM; it was hunted in London and Karachi alike. Its administrative fate was in the hands of PML[N] government

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and the military establishment, that was why MQM used to fly in turn with both pro-military and anti-Sharif and vice versa, depending on the situation at hand, because there was no guarantee that it could save itself either under a pure military regime or under the Sharif government which was more sympathetic to the PPP in Sindh rather than the MQM because of Zardari's determined support in parliament for the PML[N]'s Sharifs.

The latest match between the Military Establishment and the MQM started with the launching of Karachi Operation on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013, Karachi was particularly handed over to Pakistan Rangers with power to take action against the culprits without any discrimination.

[It is also on testimony and has been mentioned in detail in '*The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III*' that the MQM and ANP were the two parties who had been urging the Pak-Army to take control of the city – many MQM statements of 2011-13 are on record.]

However, MQM Chief Altaf Hussain, who was earlier vociferously seeking direct involvement of Army in Karachi, abruptly changed his stance and started criticizing Pakistan Army and intelligence agencies with allegations of partiality. Military exercised restraint, but venomous campaign of self-assumed blames against Pakistan's key security agencies—Army, Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI] and Rangers continued unabated.

Under the growing condemnation and pressure from public, MQM leaders often resorted to plead for forgiveness and regretted his remarks. It was Altaf Hussain's usual way, and political jugglery which he had been repeating quite frequently.

On 8<sup>th</sup> February 2015; the Rangers arrested a senior MQM worker namely Rafiq Rajput who not only ran a team of 'hit men' but was also involved in the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2007 carnage in the Karachi.

In May 2015, Altaf Hussain crossed all the limits of political ethics and morality to demonize the Pak-Army and its institutions while seeking help from Indian secret agency RAW; MQM leadership in Pakistan launched a campaign to defend him but the public pressure again forced him to seek apology. Like before, Hussain again apologized for his derogatory remarks and also backed out from his statement about seeking help from RAW.

MQM leadership in Pakistan were already confused when on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015, in a targeted operation, Rangers' forces carried out a raid at Nine-Zero, Hussain targeted Pak Army and ISI once again, but later, had admired the same army and Gen Raheel Sharif, the Army Chief.

ON DE-WEAPONIZING KARACHI:

Referring to the 'GEO News' dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013: an investigative report laid bare that Karachi's Black Economy generated a staggering Rs:830 million every day. This shocking revelation was made in the Geo News program 'Capital Talk.' As per details:

- *At least Rs:10 million was being paid in extortion on a daily basis.*
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- *Kidnapping for ransom amounted to Rs:50 million.*
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- *Every day the parking mafia, which operated over 500 lots in the city, hooked Rs:2.4 million.*
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- *There were over 55,000 hawkers operating stalls / kiosks in the city, who paid Rs:8.25 million to blackmailers every day.*
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- *The water mafia sold approximately 272 million gallons of water illegally each day amounting to Rs:100 million.*
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- *The city housed 15,000 drug and gambling dens, which made Rs:150 million per day.*
- 
- *Karachi's land mafia illegally grabbed over 30,000 acres of government land denting the national exchequer by Rs:7 billion annually and Rs:230 million daily.*
- 
- *The city's transport mafia extorted Rs:10.48 million from buses, rickshaws, and taxis.*
- 
- *Illegal payments called "Dhakka Wasooli" received from trucks, container - trucks, and oil tankers earned the mafia an additional Rs:7.5 million.*
- 
- *Electricity worth Rs:10.5 million was stolen daily in the city and there were between 4,000 to 5,000 'kundas' (illegal connections) in Karachi.*
- 
- *Criminals associated with the health industry deprived the poor patients of Rs:3 million every day.*
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- *Vehicle theft in the city remained at all-time high, with an average of 40-50 motorcycles and 20-25 cars lifted daily. This translated into Rs:20.5 million a day.*
- 
- *Street criminals looted around 125-150 mobile phones, cash, jewelry and other valuables worth Rs:5.2 million daily.*
- 
- *Short-term kidnapping in which the abductees were held at gun-point and driven around the city for several hours generated over Rs:3 million. Approximately 10-15 such kidnappings were being reported from city's posh localities every day.*
- 
- *The police in Karachi also received bribes worth Rs:210 million on a daily basis, which allegedly went into the pockets of officers from top to bottom.*

To curb those rising trends of loot & plunder by the political factions, during the same month of *September 2013*; Rangers were given mandate to launch an 'enhanced operation' against criminal elements in Karachi and the federal cabinet empowered the force to lead a targeted advance with the support of Karachi's local police. The intelligence agencies had already identified the criminals, purportedly backed by certain political elite of Karachi, who were allegedly involvement in targeted killings, kidnappings for ransom, extortion and terrorism in the metropolitan city Karachi.

The Rangers-led 'targeted operation' to restore peace to the city under the direction of the Sindh government commenced on a low-key level – a number of 'suspects' taken into custody and some arms and ammunition seized but the lawlessness continued as before in public perception.

The Rangers had only a limited, determined and surgical role; tasking them alone for the long run could be fraught with risk. The ultimate responsibility for law and order in the city was left with the Sindh Police; they had the constitutional responsibility to exercise the law-enforcement in the city.

The new IG Police Shahid Hayat, was posted as CCPO Karachi to set about making changes. His immediate challenge was to restore the morale within the rank and file. While the politicisation of the police force over the last two decades had been horrendous, far more dangerous was that their different political bosses encouraged 'criminalisation' across the board.

Referring to Ikram Sehgal's opinion appeared in 'the News' dated *19<sup>th</sup> September 2013*:

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*'Ch Nisar Ali Khan, the Federal Interior Minister, a level-headed person, immediately initiated reforms in law-enforcement entities in an organised manner; significantly a reformer head quite opposite to his predecessor Rehman Malik.*

*Mr Malik had created continuous havoc with peace of the city with his 'voodoo' brand of politics, reducing this once bustling metropolis into a virtual state of anarchy.'*

The big challenge was that the MQM contested the transparency of that on-going process. The key to success was that the perception of even-handedness must be firmly established in the minds of the people. To protect against excesses, the PPP government aimed to create a 'Public Safety Commission' [PSC] for oversight on the operations. Armed with powers of an ombudsman duly mandated by law, the PSC was to be empowered to stop infringement of fundamental rights of the citizens – but in fact it was a confronting strategy.

The new PML[N] government did not announce that Karachi would be de-weaponised [*though there have been continuous urge and suggestion from various social experts on Karachi*], but the Ranger's command preferred to [un-announced] de-weaponise Karachi taking it as the first important step towards restoration of peace & order.

In Ranger's opinion, Karachi's de-weaponisation could not only halt lawlessness but also put an end to the proliferating terrorism that was hurting Karachi economically, socially, culturally, and above all psychologically. The later reports proved that the strategy went extremely successful.

Ikram Sehgal posed a cogent question that:

*'.....in which other city in the world do citizens run around freely toting weapons? Even dozens of such trumpeted operations will not rid us of the menace of criminality and terrorism if deweaponisation is not ensured.*

*.....armed guards without uniforms are a common sight; hundreds are seen at functions outside hotels, wedding halls, etc. How does one differentiate whether the man carrying a gun is a law enforcer or a criminal?'*

The fact remains that the people of this country were never so lucky to get wise or responsible parliamentarians to get new laws as per requirements

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of the changing social scenarios NOR did they have courageous superior courts to amend their 150 years old practices of criminal procedure code and admissibility of evidences placed before their subordinate courts.

When the police felt that their courts failed to convict even a single mass killer, suicide bombing planner, terrorist in possession of AK47 rifles and mortar guns – they developed an untold culture of '*police muqabla*' [police-encounters] throughout the country.

The statistics would prove that the number of '*police muqabla*' events and the number of criminals killed in such '*organised police events*' during the past five years would appear at least 500 times more than the numbers available from preceding decade. The lawyers would term them '*extra-judicial killings*' but where the judicial system was in Pakistan to define the phrase of '*extra judicial*'.

History would mention that this was another form of anarchy coupled with rebellion in Pakistan – but the impotent judiciary and incapable parliament pushed the police into this lawlessness but preferred to witness it smilingly.

*Supreme Court, in its judgment on Karachi in October 2011, had categorically noted that Karachi's lights and peace would not come back, the killings of innocent people by gangs working for Bhatta and Land grabbing would not come to halt unless the whole city is de-weaponised. All political, ethnic and religious stakeholders, who were in fact backing their loyal killers, turned only deaf ears to the plea.*

Then there was a spate of deadly explosions in Karachi and Quetta killing scores of innocent, peaceful citizens. Again there were loud roars from the civil society and intelligentsia to de-weaponize Karachi in order to restore a modicum of peace in that city then entirely left at the mercy of killer mafias and gangsters.

There has been never a political will to implement that de-weaponisation decision which single factor could put a tab on the proliferating terrorism, surging violence and spiralling lawlessness debilitating Karachi economically and socially. The governments in Islamabad and in Karachi are still sleeping and enjoying blood sprees on media channels. The PPP, MQM, TTP, ANP and other sectarian groups have been a part of a diabolic conspiracy to keep Karachi in constant spell of impasse, insecurity and turmoil.

....de-weaponisation of Karachi could not be done till today even.

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*[Historical Fact: Grave apprehension arose in the ruling Muslim League of West Pakistan, dominated by landlords, when the East Bengal Assembly in 1951 voted to end feudalism by abolishing Permanent Settlement and absentee landlordism, imposing ceilings on landholdings and thus making sure that no new feudal landholding was able to crop up.*

*The fact remains that the feudalism never allowed meaningful land reforms in Pakistan. Without grassroots participation, a defaced version of democracy created a vacuum ripe for exploitation by both criminals and terrorists.]*

During the first week of December 2013, the question of extending Rangers' stay in Karachi was made controversial by the Sindh government because the Rangers had taken custody of certain stalwarts of the PPP and the MQM who were backing their respective criminal gangs involved in the high profile ransom and extortion crimes. Some high figures like former federal minister Dr Asim Hussain were picked up while homes of certain big names like Sharjeel Memon were allegedly raided and hard currency up to two billions were recovered as cash dumped in residential basements.

The Sindh's PPP government, on the directions of their Chief Asif Ali Zardari, sitting in self exile in Dubai, declined to renew the Rangers' stay in Sindh which was due on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

*After delaying the matter for a few days, the Sindh government took the issue to the provincial assembly which adopted a resolution to provide for checks and conditions on Rangers' special powers to raid and arrest the suspects.*

However, the federal interior ministry on 23<sup>rd</sup> December gave a 60-day extension in the special policing powers granted to Rangers in the province – and the federal ministry rejected the summary sent by the Sindh government on the subject of Rangers' policing powers.

De-weaponization issue remained there because the politicians of all the stake-holder parties did not want it – most of them were to loose their business and authority that way.